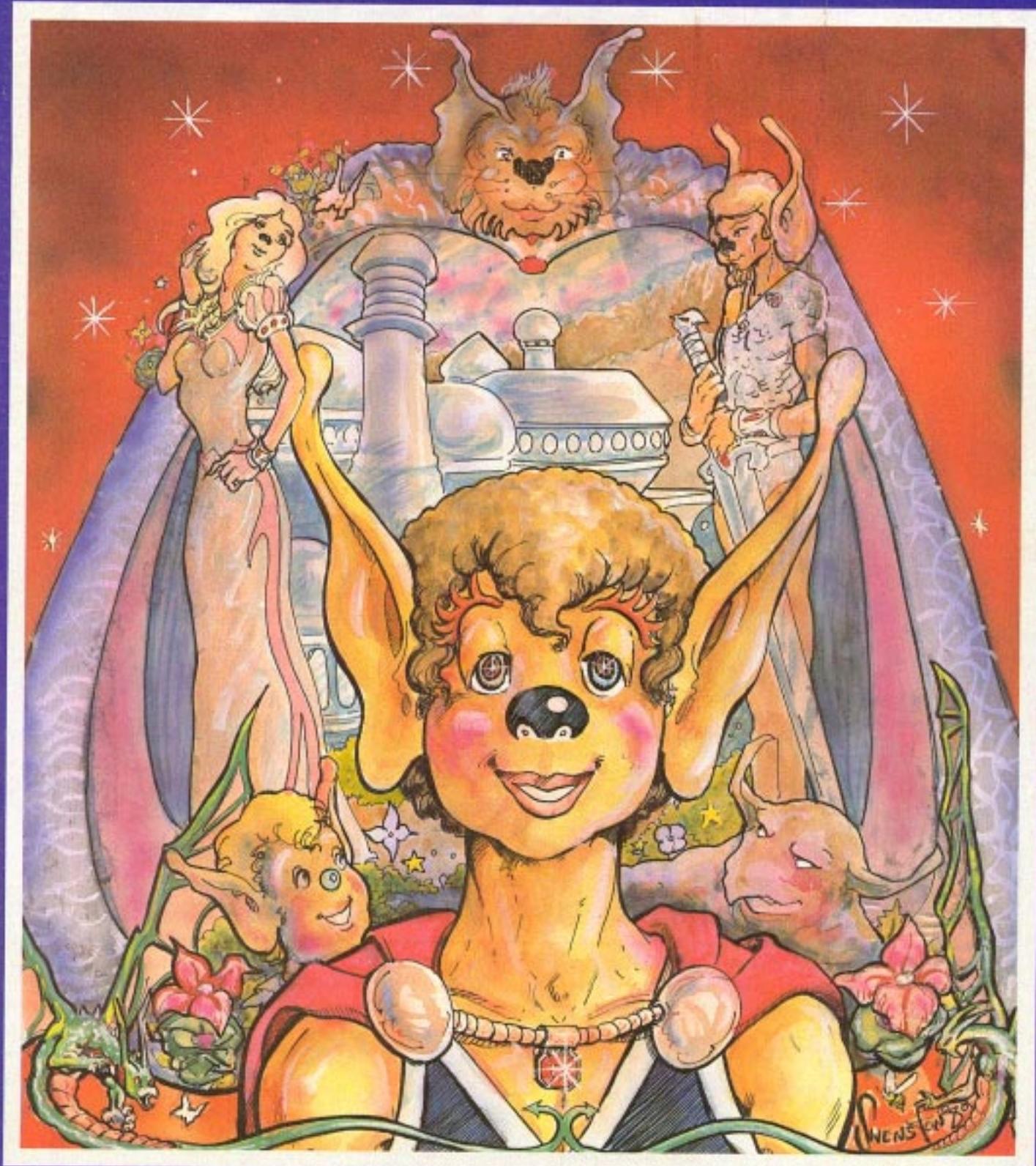


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February. The only good thing about February (if you're not a fan of cold weather, as I am not) is that it only has 28 days. Brrr....

This February marks the two-year anniversary of Dragon Publishing (or TSR Periodicals, as we used to be known) existing as a separate division of TSR Hobbies, Inc. If you've been with us that long, Happy Anniversary; if not, glad to have you with us now.

This issue of *Dragon*™ magazine starts part of the facelift of the magazine I referred to last month. You'll notice we're changing to a three column format and a new text typeface. We hope these changes give *Dragon* both a better physical appearance and better readability.

* * *

Some of you (especially the entrants) may be wondering about the results of our Second International Dungeon Design Competition (IDDC II). Response was almost overwhelming, with literally hundreds of entries. It does take a lot of time to wade through so much material, but the judging process is continuing, and we should have our winners before too much longer. And with the quality of the entries we've seen so far, the winner will be something else....

* * *

Good news to those of you who buy *Dragon* magazine over the counter rather than by subscription—starting with last month's issue, *Dragon* should be available in most of the bookstores where other TSR Hobbies products are available. Reason? Well, Random House, Inc., (one of the largest publishing houses in the country) is now the sole distributor of Dragon Publishing products to the book market trade, just as they are for TSR games. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, their vast distribution network will make *Dragon* magazine available wherever D&D® and AD&D™ are found.

* * *

Not directly related to *Dragon* magazine, but something I feel role-playing gamers should be aware of, is the formation of the TSR Role-Playing Game Association. *Dragon* used to try to list DMs across the country in our "Mapping the Dungeons"

listing. Now, the RPGA will be providing that service and much more. There's an ad elsewhere in this magazine that gives you all the details, but basically it's going to be an international association of role-playing gamers on a scope never before attempted. Imagine a game club with 100,000 or more members and you'll get the idea. With the sanctioned tournaments that are planned, at last there will be a *real* way for Player A in New York to be compared against Player B in Los Angeles.

* * *

More good news: Two new projects by Dragon Publishing are now available (or will be as soon as we get them shipped out to the dealers and distributors). The first long-awaited "Finieous Treasury" (see the ad elsewhere in this magazine). Finieous fans can now have all the episodes of the adventures of Finieous Fingers, Fred, and Charly as they appeared in the first four years of *The Dragon*, plus a new, never-before-published Finieous adventure, background information on the characters in the strip, and an autobiographical profile of the author/artist of Finieous, J.D. Webster himself.

* * *

Also soon to be off the press is *The Best of the Dragon, Volume II*. *Best of II* will contain some material from the first two publishing volumes of *The Dragon* that didn't make it into *Best of I*, plus more from later issues. Keep an eye in the magazine for notice of direct mail sales if you don't find it at your local dealer's.

* * *

Coming back to *Dragon* next month after a rather lengthy hiatus will be a miniature figure review column. "Figuratively Speaking" will be written for the most part by longtime *Dragon* contributor and veteran gamer & miniaturist Bill Fawcett.

* * *

It's got to get warmer next month...it's got to...

Dragon T.M.

Vol. V, No. 8 February 1981

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We're proud of the way issue #46 of *Dragon* magazine looks, and we hope you like the changes we've made in the appearance of the pages. Even if you don't like the "new look," or find it a little hard to get used to, we think you'll find that the high quality of the articles and artwork hasn't changed a bit.

The headline acts of this month's show are The Temple of Poseidon, another in our continuing series of ready-to-use playing aids for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, and the first large installment of Pinsom, a new fantasy adventure comic strip drawn by Steve Swenston, who also provided us with a full-color rendition of Pinsom and the strip's other characters for this month's cover. The adventure itself,

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**If your mailing label says TD-46
this is your last issue-resubscribe!**

which begins on page 66, is "only" in black & white, but wait 'til you see it...

The Temple of Poseidon is the creation of Paul Reiche III — a creation which helped him get a job with TSR Hobbies, Inc. To learn more about Paul and Poseidon, read page 31 — but don't peek at the rest of the adventure if you intend to put a character of yours into this perilous place.

Next on the bill of fare, and leading off our feature section this month, is The Sorceror's Jewel, a short story from the pen of J. Eric Holmes. While maintaining a career as a neurosurgeon and an "alter ego" as a published author of fantasy novels, Eric also found time to serve as editor for the original edition of the *Dungeons & Dragons@ Basic Set*. "Jewel" is the second Holmes story to appear in *Dragon* magazine, and it features the same two principal characters as "Trollshead" (issue #31).

A few issues back, we printed an article which pointed out some of the shortcomings that the author found in *The Tribes of Crane*, a popular play-by-mail game. Now, expressing the pro-Crane point of view, we present Richard Lloyd's view, "Crane is what you make of it." Richard is the designer of *StarMaster*, another PBM game, and an avid and active player in *Tribes of Crane*.

It's been a year since we published any rule changes or variations for *Divine Right*. In that time, *DR* designer Glenn Rahman has sent us variants, at the rate of one every two months or so. We're giving them to you all at once in a *Divine Right* special section which begins on page 14 and ends with the latest installment of Glenn's Minarian Legends, this time telling the story of The Black Hand.

It's also been quite a spell since we devoted any space to *Boot Hill*. All you card-table cowboys will need more than a fast draw to tangle with Tyrannosaurus Tex, the meanest lizard of them all, adapted for *BH* by contributing editor Roger Moore. Following that, you'll find a short but useful article which will help give *BH* players a purpose in life.

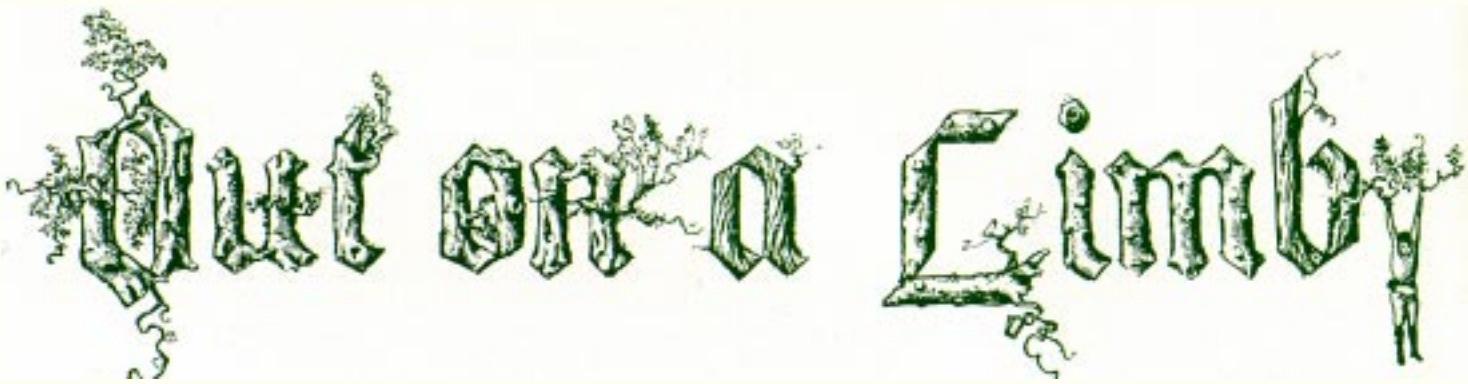
If you think the Paladin down the street has a tough sword, you can gain a different perspective on big blades by reading "Mightier than the pen," a discussion of magic swords from legend and literature. The last special feature inside is our Valentine's treat to you — a painting by Mike Carroll which is pleasing and perplexing at the same time.

This month's tour of Dragon's Bestiary is a short one, since space limitations forced us to cut back to a solitary new creature, the Gaund. Contributing editor Ed Greenwood provided the description and the drawings.

At the front of a four-page Dragon's Augury section are two reviews of the same product, TSR's *The World of Greyhawk*, followed by an "inside look" at Greyhawk from TSR's design/production chief Lawrence Schick. Also underscrutinized in this issue are *The Complete Book of Wargames* and three fantasy/adventure playing aids from Dimension Six.

Instead of a regular Giants in the Earth column this month, GITE writer/editor Tom Moldvay takes some space to describe the right way for readers to send in suggestions for the column. As usual, we have some Sage Advice answers for *D&D@* and *AD&D* players, plus John Prados' Simulation Corner and Mark Herro's examination of the best-selling home computers in The Electric Eye. Wormy and Finieus both went into hiding this month, but Jasmine is back with another two-page episode.

Well, I just gazed at the calendar on the wall and realized that this is the shortest month of the year, which means that we have three days less time to make the next magazine, which means that we're already three days further behind schedule than we were already, which means we'd better get started right NOW — Kim.



It's okay to copy

Dear Editor:

Your Dungeon Master Evaluation Form (Issue #43) should be invaluable to any DM desiring to improve his dungeon. However, one copy of the form will not be enough. May the form be reproduced from the magazine? You didn't say.

Paul Parsons
Silver Spring, Md.

Oversight on our part, Paul. Yes, the form may be photocopied or otherwise reproduced so that it can be distributed among a group of players. The article should have carried a notice to that effect, but obviously it didn't. — Kim

On 99's name

Dear Editor:

I would like to make a correction on C.O.N.-T.R.O.L. agent 99's name in "The Super Spies" (Issue #44). The name is listed as being Susan Hilton, disclosed to the public during a particular episode. Having seen the episode several times, I can say with great confidence that the name was just another alias — a fact which she also disclosed at the end of the same episode. As far as I know, there has never been another mentioned name.

Chris Tisone
Anaheim, Calif.

Dwarven Paladin?

To the editor:

In an issue of *Dragon* in the article *Giants in the Earth*, one of the "Giants" was a 14th-level dwarven Paladin. Yet dwarves can't be Paladins. How is this possible?

Mark Gartner
Cranbury, NJ

*For an answer to this question, we sought out Tom Moldvay, one of the co-creators of *Giants in the Earth*. Tom's response is as follows:*

*"Since the heroes in *Giants in the Earth* come from literature and not gaming, they should not be expected to always fit neatly into game terms. The order of priority when designing heroes for *Giants in the Earth* is 1) faithfulness to the character as he or she appears in literature and 2) faithfulness to the game system. In AD&D dwarves cannot be*

*paladins, yet the term "paladin" is an apt description of Durathror (*Giants in the Earth*, *Dragon* #27), so we artificially made him a dwarven paladin. Since he is an NPC, he is not likely to upset the balance of play as long as the DM is careful. The best way to look at Durathror as a dwarven paladin is "the exception that proves the rule."*

Article ideas

Dear Editor:

I have never been one for reading magazines until I recently bought an issue of *Dragon* #39 (no, this is not an old letter just now being sent, it is an old *Dragon* just now being bought). I have enjoyed every page that I have read so far, and I plan to read every page — from front cover to back.

I really enjoyed George Lakring and Tim Mesford's article on the Anti-Paladin. Are there any more NPCs to come? How about someone out there doing an NPC on the Bounty Hunter? I have heard several requests for such a NPC in my gaming career, but I personally have neither the time nor the resources for such a task.

For a long time I have wanted to incorporate two warring nations (for example) into my campaign — for war provides intrigue, espionage, and a setting for adventure. But so far, I have not found a satisfactory system to resolve such a large-scale battle involving hundreds or even thousands of men. Have you any ideas?

Dave Hansen
Conroe, Tex.

We're grateful to Dave for the kind comments — and for the two suggestions for articles. Perhaps one of you writers who happens to read this will sit down and produce just such a story, and we'll be able to make Dave's wish come true. — Kim

Holy what?

To the editor:

In the Sage Advice column of the October 1980 *Dragon* (#42), in response to a question concerning holy water sprinklers, it was stated that this was simply another name for a morning star. It was also stated that "The only use of this term to mean a gun which we are aware of is a modern nickname for a terrorist weapon that sprays large numbers of bullets into crowds."

However, consider the following passage, taken from the book *Antique Firearms* by

Frederick Wilkinson, from Chapter 8, "Combination Weapons and Curiosities":

"In an inventory of the Tower of London in 1547 there appears an entry recording 'holy water sprinklers' with 'gonnes in the topp.' These holy water sprinklers have only a tenuous ecclesiastical connection and were, in fact, spiked clubs mounted at the end of a long pole. Examples of such weapons have survived; they comprise a spiked block in which are incorporated three barrels, about nine inches long, fitted with touchholes; the muzzles may be covered with metal plates. Whether this was a serious weapon or not is uncertain, but clearly it could have served as a hand gun, for basically it resembles the early type of firearm in which the small barrel was mounted at the end of a long pole. Once the three barrels had been discharged by a glowing match, the spiked head would certainly have served as a reserve means of defense or attack."

So, you see, holy water sprinklers are guns and were such, some four hundred years before Webster's current dictionary and terrorists.

David R. Eichel
Rochester, N.Y.

Not again!

To the editor:

I would like to do my part to shed a little light on a subject I have a little knowledge of. In issue #42, Sage Advice, a question arose as to whether or not the holy water sprinkler was a gun. I've done a lot of private research on the subject. The holy water sprinkler is a mace-like weapon (as described in the article), but the name is also used to describe an early handgun which fired six balls at once. It also had a spiked, mace-like butt for close-combat.

William E. Belli
Oak Harbor, Wash.

Phantasmal phiguring

Sir:

"Now you see it...." (issue #43) was a great article, and I hope that you continue with your present policy of crowding many high-quality features into each issue of *Dragon* magazine. The *Phantasmal Force* spell is currently not allowed in our campaign, however, because some aspects of it that need further explanation

(Turn to page 52)

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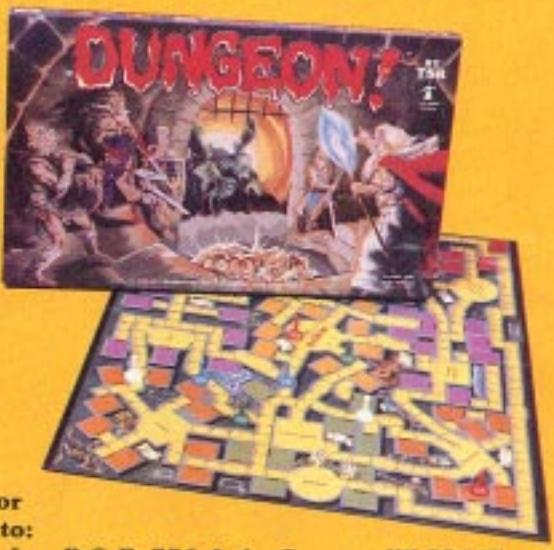


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The Sorceror's Jewel



ROSLO

by
John Eric Holmes

The young human had a map. Zereth had seen innumerable treasure maps, and he was not impressed with this one.

"Whoever sold you this, sire," he said callously, tossing it down on the table between them, "did a poor job. The parchment isn't even aged."

"You wrong me, Sir Elf," said the man, "for I never claimed this to be authentic. It was drawn yesterday; I saw it drawn myself."

"The arched eyebrows of the black elf shot up on his forehead. "Drawn? By whom?"

"By Misteera the Medium."

"At a seance?"

"Verily. The controlling spirit claimed to be one Yartoosh, a sorcerer dead these two thousand years."

Zereth did not answer, but he picked up the map again and turned it over in his long, delicate fingers. Finally he handed it to the small halfling who sat on his left.

"I've heard of Yartoosh," said the little fellow.

"Aye, so have I," replied the elf, "and what I've heard makes me think his tomb would be more tightly guarded than that." He gestured at the map, then turned his eyes to the human lordling.

"Your pardon, sire," he said softly, his glance taking in the man's rich cloak, silk tunic and gold-ringed fingers. "You do not appear to be in need of funds, as perhaps my friend and I may be." There was no particular point in the two adventurers denying that they were dead poor. The merest inquiry at any of the town's haunts of mercenaries and soldiers of fortune would reveal that. "So may I inquire as to the nature of the treasure that so draws your concern?"

Tarkan Gurdudson paused, looking at the tabletop, not at the elf's eyes. The halfling thought he was going to refuse to answer, in which case the elf would refuse to cooperate, and the mission, the first real mission he had been able to promote in a month, would fall apart right here on the tavern table. The Lord Tarkan would find someone else to go after the tomb of Yartoosh — and he, Boinger, would go back to wondering where his next meal was coming from. The human sighed and looked up at the elf and the halfling, both of whom had their eyes on him.

"You are right," he said. "There is a mystic jewel—or a jewel reputed to have mystic powers, buried with the sorcerer, or so it is said."

The elf grunted noncommittally.

"Anything else in the tomb is yours," the man hurried on, "plus your usual fee . . ."

"Tomb robbing needs a cleric, if we can persuade one to aid us," said Boinger.

"I have a . . . a legacy, from my uncle, who was Patriarch of the Church of Saint

Mellan," said Tarkan, "which would provide priestly protection. The tomb does lie beneath the north end graveyard; 'tis not likely that any lawful cleric would endorse its rupture."

"Did you speak to the spirit?" asked Zereth.

"At the seance?" asked the man. "No, but I heard it speak—that is, Misteera and I had agreed that if she reached the ghost of the dead sorcerer she would ask for the map of his tomb, but not reveal to the others in the circle what it was we sought."

"I think," said the elf slowly, as the other two leaned forward in their eagerness to hear his pronouncement. "I think," he repeated, "that Boinger and I are going to have to attend a seance ourselves. If we have your permission?"

The human nodded. *

When Tarkan departed from The Green Dragon, only minutes later, Zereth pushed Boinger off the end of the wooden bench on which they both sat. "Follow him," he ordered, "and be secretive about it." It was midnight when the little thief returned. His elven companion had left the tavern common room and gone upstairs to the rented room the two shared, but when Boinger roused him he dressed and came down. The noisy crowd at the bar and fire served their secret purpose better than whispering in their room, where ears might be pressed to the adjoining wall.

Boinger's report was brief. "Our client was accosted on the street by a lady in a palanquin. A very lovely lady with long blonde hair," the halfling sighed. He was, himself, extremely susceptible to feminine charms. "Well, he seemed surprised and embarrassed, but he obviously knew this beauty. He got into her chair with her and the four half-orcs staggered off, carrying double burden, and I followed." Zereth nodded, so the little thief went on. "That's about it—they were carried the length of Way Street and up an alley to the back entrance of one of those big walled houses, and then they went in and closed the gate. I couldn't get in." The halfling paused.

"Go on," said the elf. "It didn't take you this long to walk to the end of town and back. What else did you find out? Or did our friend emerge from the lady's residence?"

"No," said Boinger, "nor would I, had I been invited to share her company for the evening. Ah, Zereth, such gentle features, such soft white skin, such . . ."

"Spare me," said the elf. "So he didn't come out. What else?"

"A little information, but it took me a while, and I've developed a thirst." The elf signaled to the barmaid and a tankard of ale was brought for the little halfling. He preferred wine, but their budget no longer permitted it. Much more of this sort of austerity, he thought as he drank, and he would be forced to seek honest work.

"Well," he reported, at last, wiping the

foam from his clean-shaven face, "Tarkan is indeed nobility, as we suspected from his bearing. His family has a huge fief to the north of here, as well as extensive holdings in the wool and sheepskin trade in town. Our friend is the eldest son. He stands to inherit; most common folk give him a good report."

"Most folk? What do others say?"

"Naught to fault the man himself," the halfling answered. "His judgment is criticized because of his infatuation with Lady Verbeena, the blonde charmer in the palanquin," he explained. "She is a lady of no visible means of support—has sustained her household through the friendships of a number of young noble gentlemen and wealthy tradesmen."

"So some say," Boinger sighed again, "that she is obviously using our friend. Ah, had I the means to be so used! But you didn't see her, Zereth . . ."

"Little matter if I did. I'm not the moonstruck calf so many of my acquaintances seem to be." He smiled, rather grimly. "Finish your ale and we'll to bed."

"This sour stuff is hardly worth finishing."

"Drink up, there's nothing for breakfast in the morning anyway."

Boinger sighed. *

At the head of the table the woman writhed as if in pain. Her eyes were tight shut, her teeth clenched in a grimace that seemed, to the little halfling's gaze, to be epileptic.

"Quickly," hissed the big lizard man, holding his mistress by the shoulders, bending over her like a saurian nursemaid. "Quickly, ssseats, sssirs and ladies! Ssit, clasp the handsss!"

The six in the darkened room hastened to obey. Zereth moved to the side of the gasping medium, took one of her pale hands in his dark fingers. Boinger positioned himself quickly on the opposite side of the round table, next to a veiled woman of statuesque proportions. If he was going to sit in the dark for an hour holding someone's hand, he thought, at least it would be the fairest hand in the room.

On the halfling's left sat a plump woman who sniffled continuously through the ensuing seance. At first Boinger thought she had a cold, but this proved not to be the case.

"Quiet, quiet!" hissed the reptile-man, "the sssspiritss do ssspeak!" He let go of the medium, Misteera, and blew out the lamp behind her chair. The shuttered room was plunged into impenetrable darkness. From the head of the table, the medium began making weird noises, moaning and groaning as if indeed the room were filled with the spirits of the dead. All the clients of the mystery worker clasped hands around the table in the dark and waited. The plump matron on Boinger's left freed her hand to blow her nose and gave it back to him moist and clammy. He concentrated on the soft,

warm fingers of the delicately perfumed lady on his other side. All the sitters were cloaked and cowed to hide their identities from each other, although all were known in advance to Misteera and her servant. Several of the women, like the unknown beauty next to Boinger, were veiled as well.

A bell rang. There had been a bell placed on the table before the medium went into her trance: a bell, a slate, a piece of chalk and a candle. The spirits might be moving the bell, Boinger thought, but more likely the lizard man, who was not part of the circle, had another bell. How could anybody believe this fraud, he wondered?

The medium ceased moaning and repeated Boinger's thought in a deep, spectral voice. "How could anyone believe? The spirits will speak. All will be revealed. There are those here who doubt. . ." The lady on Boinger's left went "Oh, no!" under her breath. "They will be convinced." The bell rang again, and the halfling felt just a tiny tingle of alarm run up his spine.

"The spirits will answer a question from each of those whose soul is pure," the voice went on. "Let the seeker on my right ask first."

"Bombay, my son," sobbed the plump lady, "Are you all right over there? It's your birthday, poor boy, Momma wants to know if you are all right."

"Yes, Mom, we're all well over here," the voice answered.

"Are you warm enough? I wanted to knit you some warm socks."

"Here in the spirit world," the voice in the dark replied, "we have no socks nor giving of socks."

"Oh, dear, I hope he's all right. He's only thirty-six . . ." the lady wept. Boinger now realized why her hands were so wet, for she had been crying continuously since the lights went out.

The medium then addressed him, so Boinger asked for a message from his Aunt Tisane "on the other side" and was assured that his dear old aunt was happy and sent her love.

"And what of the . . . uh, lady, next?" said the deep voice. The lovely-smelling person on Boinger's right tensed and involuntarily squeezed his hand.

"My friend goes on a dangerous journey." Her voice was soft and husky, Boinger thought, just the kind of voice one would like to hear at one's pillow "Will the spirits tell me if this be a wise decision? Will he return to me well and healthy?"

There was a long pause. Boinger listened to the sniffling of Bombay's Momma and the soft breathing of the rest of the members of the circle. The veiled lady kept a tight grip on his fingers.

"Yes," said the spirit voice, finally. "You would do well not to obstruct him in his search, for the truth will out!"

"Oh!" The lady jumped and Boinger, eager to be of help, squeezed her hand reassuringly.

The medium worked her way around the table answering questions: "Yes, sell both the cows," and giving reassurance: "Your sister says keep the necklace and wear it in good health," until she came at last to Zereth.

All the time this was going on, Boinger could hear the scratching of chalk on the slate somewhere before him in the middle of the table.

"The one who gazes into darkness," the voice demanded.

"Oh, spirits of the departed ones," said Zereth seriously, "is there one among you, Yartoosh, the long dead sorcerer and seer, and if so may I speak with him?"

The "spirit" voice mumbled rapidly to itself for a moment and then Misteera the Medium gave an ear-splitting scream. All present jumped to their feet with additional cries of alarm. The lizard man struck flint and steel and ignited a twist of tinder which he held to the lamp. As the light came up, Boinger saw Zereth bending over the medium. Her face was as pale as chalk, her red lips were parted, a thin trickle of froth ran from her mouth and down her chin.

The lizard man grabbed her away from the dark elf with a snarl. "Too many questionssss!" he cried. "Misstresss faintsss—everybody go." As they paused, some still foolishly holding hands (including Boinger and his lovely unknown), the reptile lashed his tail and shouted, "Go! Go! Mistresss needss rest! Rest!"

As the group scurried out of the room into the darkened alley which fronted Madame Misteera's establishment, Boinger remembered to pick up the slate and look at it.

"Halfling thief," caught his eye as did "Sinister elf," for they were obviously two- or three-word descriptions of Zereth and himself. There were six pairs of words listed down the slate. "Grieving mother" and "Henpecked husband" were easy to identify. He was startled, however, to see the last set of words on the list. They were: "Evil old bitch." The epithet did not fit any of the sitters at the seance, at least not to Boinger's mind. Outside, the halfling hastened to speak to the veiled lady.

"The night be dark, my lady," he said, hitching up his sword belt so that the accoutrements jingled. "Mayhap we can escort you to a safer part of town?"

"We?"

"My elven companion and myself."

"Why thank ye, kind sir," she said in that inviting voice. "My chair is down the alley this way, but if you would see me safely to it, would be a most chivalrous act on thy part."

The lady's bearers had a small fire going in the gutter, and the wooden palanquin near it was one Boinger had seen before.

"Dost come here often, my lady?" he asked.

She laughed and undid the veil that covered her fair face. "No, sir halfling," she

said, "Nor do you, I wager." Her servants scrambled sleepily to their feet and held the traveling chair upright for her. "Did you get a fair message from your aunt?" she asked.

Boinger and Zereth smiled. "Aunt Tisane can't speak a word of common, and, last I heard, she was very much alive," said the halfling.

"A fictitious message, as was mine," the lady admitted. "Your friend, however, seemed to ask a more difficult query."

Zereth nodded. "Aye," he said, and one I fear the poor medium wishes had never been asked. Still, it will be our business to see the quest through."

The lady entered her chair and held out her hand, once again, to the enraptured halfling. He kissed it gently, she called a command, and the half-orcs picked her up and trotted off into the darkness.

"A charming creature," Boinger sighed. "Do you think she knows who we are?"

"Of course she does," said Zereth. "What I fear is that now Yartoosh may also know who we are."

"A grim thought," said Boinger. He related to the elf what he had seen on the slate, then added, "I wonder who the 'evil old bitch' might be."

"I thought that was obvious," said the elf.

* * * *

Zereth's next move was to seek an interview with the medium alone. When he returned, however, Boinger did not need to ask if the mission had gone well. The dark elf stalked into their room, slamming the door behind him, threw his cloak on the bed and sprawled beside it on his back, glaring at the ceiling with its old carved oak beams.

The halfling waited what he considered a decent interval, and then spoke.

"No information?"

"Oh, some, I suppose," growled the elf, sitting up. "Trouble is, I am sure she is lying, but I don't know which are the lies and which is the truth."

"How about the map?"

"Oh, she claims the map is genuine, and somehow I think it is, although I don't for a moment believe that the ghost of Yartoosh ever drew it."

"You mean she drew it herself? But why?" the halfling asked.

"She means for us to go after Tarkan's treasure. What she didn't realize, or only realized when your veiled charmer let it slip at last night's seance, is that Tarkan means to go himself."

"Ah," said the little thief, "both ladies display some anxiety over our young friend risking this expedition, even in our expert care."

"What did you find out?" asked the elf, sitting up. He watched as his diminutive friend took a dagger from the belt hanging over the back of his chair and tossed it into the air. It landed point first in the center of the scarred wooden table.



"The young lord is well known to several of the ladies of the town," Boinger began.

"You're going to have trouble explaining to our host the stab wounds in his table," said the elf, irritated.

"Hah," said the halfling. "I'll convince him it's a new trick I've learned to entertain his patrons at the bar."

"If we don't come up with some gold for the greedy wretch we will be thrown out of his inn and his bar."

"Aye," sighed the smaller one. "And with winter coming on. Shall we quit quarreling and get on with it?"

"Who's quarreling? But yes, tell me what you learned. The town ladies all have their eye on this man? I'm sure you talked to them at some length."

"Ah, yes," said Boinger, "but Mistress Verbeena, the veiled charmer, as you called her, seems to have won his heart, if not other portions of his anatomy."

"Humans are fools," said Zereth. "The elder folk handle these things with delicacy."

"I've always wondered about that," said

Boinger, folding his arms on the table and leaning forward, interested. "Perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me . . ."

"Nothing, small and foolish one!" Zereth struck the table with a dark fist. His eyes flashed, and it seemed the scar on his left cheek whitened against his skin.

"All right," said His friend, leaning back in his chair, "I did not mean to upset you. Hands off the table. Anyway, I find that the lady most bereft of Lordling Tarkan's affections is the spiritualistic Madame Misteera." He flipped the dagger into the air by its point.

Zereth snatched his fist back before the blade struck with a thunk into the wood where it had just been. "That may earn a few coppers after all," he said thoughtfully, "if you don't cut off too many drunken fingers." The black elf considered a moment, regarding the upright dagger. "Perhaps Misteera sends her ex-lover on a fatal quest, but I do not think this was her intent. She asked me *not* to take him, volunteering to help pay for the hire of more bravados to do the dirty work for him."

Zereth plucked the dagger from the wood. "Yet, I would swear she did not obtain that treasure map from the old sorcerer's shade. You saw what happened to her when I asked for him—she was not faking her collapse at the seance. She asked me not to do that to her again." He tossed the knife. It fell to the table point first, but toppled over with a clatter.

"All right," said the halfling, "she provides us with a map, which she picked up somewhere, claiming to have obtained it by means of her mediumistic powers . . ."

"Which are mostly fakery," said Zereth.

"Fake mediumistic powers," Boinger continued, "but however the map was obtained she believes in it enough not to want Tarkan to follow it. Meanwhile, Mistress Verbeena also tries to dissuade her impetuous lover from this mad quest . . ."

"Really, where did you glean that?"

"From the man himself. He convinced her that it was just a boyish lark, but she seemed to see some dire significance in the whole thing."

(Turn to page 60)

Crane is what you make of it

by Richard A. Lloyd

What prompted this article to be written was the article by Mark Cummings, "The Fatal Flaws of Crane," which appeared in Dragon magazine #40. As a longtime player in *The Tribes of Crane*, and as the game designer of *StarMaster*, Schubel & Son's other large correspondence game, I would like to comment on Mr. Cummings' essay in order to present a more balanced view of both games. As the majority of that piece dealt with Crane, so shall the majority of mine.

I have been playing *The Tribes of Crane* for about twenty months, approximately the same length of time as Mr. Cummings before he left. Far from feeling about the game as he does, my own thoughts are quite the opposite. Let me examine each of his points for leaving the game:

Cost

Mr. Cummings points out that the game player who can spend the money for two turns a month (or, one turn for each of two tribes) has a tremendous advantage over the player who can only afford to spend money to move one tribe once a month. This is true only if all other things are equal, if the players are of the same skill and put the same amount of effort into the game. Obviously, not all players are equal, and not all are willing to put into the game the time and thought needed to wring from each turn every possible advantage. Many players are content to move, explore, and let their tribes grow steadily, without entering into alliances or intrigues. I fault no one for this; a game such as *The Tribes of Crane* can be many things to many people, and not everyone is of a political frame of mind.

For myself, I have averaged between three weeks and a month for each move, simply due to the amount of time for mail to travel from New York to California, and then California to New York again. Do I have a chance playing against someone with more

tribes than I do, and also moving more often? I feel that my own efforts have compensated for a smaller position and a slower rate. I receive, and answer, anywhere from ten to fifteen letters a week, and on an irregular basis send out a limited-circulation newsletter to my close allies. This letter-writing amounts to between one and two hours a night. Through such efforts, my own alliance has grown, and I have made contacts (and treaties) with other alliances. I know about events happening across the planet of Crane, and can sometimes influence them. Through the distribution of the newsletter I can pass along crucial news and updated plans to many players within a few days. All of this is outside the scope of the typical game-turn. For the extra money that another player spends on that second move a month, or that extra tribe, one can write a lot of letters and still come out ahead, money-wise.

A player gets out of a correspondence game whatever he or she is willing to put into it. One of the critical aspects of *Crane* to bear in mind is that the phrase "correspondence game" doesn't mean correspondence only between the player and the gamesmaster. The correspondence between players is of greater importance to the game than any single turn. Skillful rumor-planting, information-brokering, or treaty-signing can affect the game for many months further down the road.

While Mark Cummings made only a brief mention of *StarMaster*, it was in the context of the expense required to play the game to its utmost. Yet, expense alone is no reason to shy away from the game. As is stated clearly in the rules booklet, which all players receive upon entering the game, *StarMaster* has many levels of activity, depending on what a player can invest in the game.

I would be interested to know if Mr. Cummings tried some of the extras of the game, or played only the basic game, and to what extent he wrote letters to enter or

build alliances and plan for a cooperative venture, like the conquest and looting of a neutral world. There is a tremendous amount that can be done in *StarMaster* with just the basic game alone (little expense) and some personal effort. I know of some special actions written by players that have taken me by surprise, and have certainly impressed me with their depth and novelty.

Combat

In eighteen months, no one attacked Mr. Cummings' tribe. But, neither did he attack anyone else. That the state of ennui developed was as much his fault as anyone else's. His rationale for this was that since, unlike *Dungeons & Dragons*®, no experience is gained in combat, there is no incentive to fight—and much incentive not to fight, since your tribe would lose warriors.

I would ask Mr. Cummings if he ever considered joining with other tribes to sack a city. Or moved to organize such an event himself? Sacking a city has traditionally yielded great amounts of wealth (especially if you don't intend to hold on to it, and therefore write your orders to specify maximum looting and pillaging). Special armor, trained predatory animals, gold, jewels, artifacts, warrior mounts and livestock are just some of the booty to be had. With such wealth a tribe can hire mercenaries, thereby increasing the number of warriors. A tribe can buy catapults, again increasing its strength, as they are expressed as "equivalent warrior strength" in combat actions. To say nothing of having the means to pay for special training, special organization, special armor, weapons, and poisons.

Obviously, sacking a city and carrying off a nice share of loot can, indeed, lead to an increase in the combat ability of the tribe, more than making up for warriors lost in battle. You are stronger for your fight, just as in D&D, although you have paid a price for it—as you would in any good D&D adventure, where a party may have had members and/or henchmen die, perhaps in

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a great struggle to recover some powerful artifact from the forces of Evil.

Whether you can tap this source of wealth and power depends on the effort you are willing to put into organizing such a task, getting all the participating tribes together, and devising a sound attack plan. Work? Yes, indeed it is, but so is outfitting a beginning first-level party in *Dungeons & Dragons* to make the best use of their initial gold, rolling for spells known, deciding on a marching order for various wilderness areas and corridor/room sizes, etc. The potential to profit from combat is there in either situation.

Boredom

Mark Cummings dropped out because the gamesmasters were no longer able to make the game sustain his interest. There are, however, many aspects of *The Tribes of Crane* he did not mention in his article. What about construction- building a road, canal, or bridge, and then a fort to collect tolls from other tribes using the new, faster path? Even complete new cities can be built, and in fact are being built in the game right now. Fortresses on islands make good bases for players thinking of turning pirate. Players with a mercantile urge can open a business in a city, and have a wide range of commodity, service, and special businesses to choose from, ranging from a small rope-weaving shop to a large, bustling shipyard.

For the politically inclined, there are political positions of Councilman, Shaman (of each of the four different tribe types), or even Kinglord. All these positions are located in a city, and can be applied for by a well written petition to the High Kinglord of Crane, together with proof that you have political influence. Certain positions will also result in your being city leader, with control over the budget, trade, defense and diplomacy of your city.

There is a lot more to the game than just moving a tribe around, as can be seen. If Mr. Cummings felt bored, is it the fault of the game, or is it his own fault, for, at least as far as one could ascertain from his article, not pursuing these activities? There is an old saying about leading a horse to water, and it is true in this case, too.

While I have been in *The Tribes of Crane* about as long as he was, I feel my own fascination with the game growing, not fading. With each passing turn the rewards from previous turns mount higher, and the new options open to me are even more thought-provoking. And to add to all this, Schubel & Son has recently introduced into the game special encounters, such as a challenge from the champion of a circus to test the mettle of your tribal warriors, or the supplications of a servant girl to rescue her mistress, held prisoner by a cruel merchant for sale to the next slave caravan.

Surely, with all this, one cannot grow bored from not having enough to think

about! The trick in *Crane*, as is also true with *StarMaster*, is to plan well in advance. Set goals for yourself and for your allies, and decide where you want to be in three months, six months, or even in a year. Make each move count toward achieving those goals, and enjoy the special encounters and discovered oddities of Crane as extras as you move.

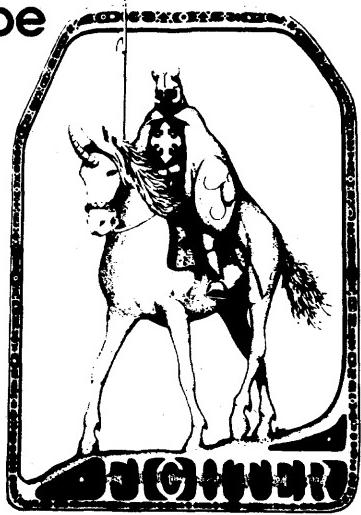
The alliance that plans ahead is not only the one that does well, but is also the one whose members, feeling a sense of purpose, are more likely to stay in the game. Boredom comes only from not being able to see each move as a step towards a greater, long-range goal, be it the taking of a city, crossing a polar ice cap, or exploring the dense jungles for ruins.

In a total view of either game, a player with absolutely *unlimited* money to spend will probably do better than another player on a smaller budget. The same is true for tennis, golf, bowling, racquetball, and a host of other activities where practice makes a lot of difference in the quality of your game, as well as for stamp collecting, coin collecting, and a plethora of other hobbies, where money can buy research texts and extensive collections. In the long run, however, I believe that player effort is just as important, and often more important, than how much money the player can spend. There is power and enjoyment there for the taking, for the player ready and willing to reach out and grab it!

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by Kyle Gray

One of the major desires of every Fighter is to come into possession of a magic sword. Powerful swords not only increase a character's fighting ability, but can also provide protection from certain spells, give information on the whereabouts of treasure, illuminate dark dungeon corridors, and perform other such useful services. Enchanted blades play an important part in fantasy role-playing and are also commonplace in modern heroic fantasy literature.

However, most players do not realize that magic swords trace their sources back to many bygone eras and civilizations which had heroic literary traditions. In an-



cient times, arms and armor were prized possessions; they were revered, given names and special characteristics. From Achilles' god-made armor and the arrows of Herakles, to Thor's Uru hammer, both gods and heroes had special weapons. Most people are acquainted with the classical heroic epics like *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid*, but many are less familiar with the later European epics, such as *Beowulf* and *Das Nibelungenlied*, in which swords such as those found in fantasy gaming are best represented.

Beowulf is the earliest extant poem in a modern European language. It recounts the adventures of the Geatish hero Beowulf, from his young warrior days, until

his death at the fangs of a dragon. There are many fantasy-gaming motifs in the Anglo-Saxon epic, including monsters, dragon hoards, and magic. Beowulf is a mighty hero; when not yet age 20, he manages to outwrestle the monster Grendel, and rips off the monster's arm in the process. Mighty as he is, though, Beowulf cannot perform many of his great deeds without the help of three swords, Naegling, Hrunting, and an unnamed magic blade. Because Unferth, a great warrior, doubts that Beowulf's own sword, Naegling, will be enough to kill Grendel's mother, Unferth lends Beowulf his own renowned blade, Hrunting.

As good as these two swords are, Grendel's mother, like Grendel himself, has skin impervious to normal steel, and without the help of still another sword, Beowulf would have died. This unnamed weapon was a sword made by giants, and blessed with giants' magic, with runes and carved decorations on its hilt. It was so massive that no normal man could lift it. Beowulf not only lifted the sword and killed Grendel's mother, but cut off Grendel's head as well, before the blade melted from exposure to the acid blood of these monsters. Without the help of this magic giants' sword, one of the greatest heroes of epic literature would have died an untimely death.

Cuchulain of Muirthemne is the greatest hero of Ireland, and his many legends are heroic masterpieces. Called the Irish Achilles, Cuchulain, the Hound of Ireland, was the nephew of King Conor of Ulster, and was said to be the son of the great god Lugh of the Long Hand. By the time he was 17, Cuchulain was without peer among the champions of Ulster. Like Beowulf, Cuchulain also had personal arms: his shield, Dubhan, and his great bronze sword, Cruaidin Calcidheann, the hard-headed one. Cuchulain used this sword to great avail until the day of his death at the hands of his bitter enemies, who finally managed to kill this great hero through the treacherous use of an enchanted spear.

The Germanic *Nibelungenlied* also contains many typical fantasy motifs, such as dwarves, dragons, and magic cloaks. Based on an earlier oral legend, this epic is perhaps the best example of heroic literature from the Christian era. The 12th-century Scandinavian Edda, *Brot*, tells of Siguro's gold-bedizened sword Gram, which had fire-tempered edges, and was bated inside with venom. From this source, and many others, an unknown, early 13th-century Austrian poet created *Das Nibelungenlied*, which tells of the death of Siegfried (Siguro), and his wife Kriemhild's revenge.

In this epic, Siegfried's sword Balmung has interesting characteristics which should be familiar to fantasy-gaming enthusiasts. Although Balmung is an excellent blade which strikes fear into the hearts of all who face it, from the context of the story it is obvious that Balmung is cursed.

At the beginning of *Das Nibelungenlied*,

Balmung is in the possession of Prince Nibelung, whom Siegfried kills, afterward stealing his weapon. Then Hagen murders Siegfried and takes Balmung for himself. After wreaking havoc on her brother's and second husband's warriors, Kriemhild, Siegfried's widow, finally reclaims her late husband's sword and uses it to kill Hagen, Siegfried's murderer. Finally, Kriemhild is then murdered by Hildebrand. So every owner of Balmung in *Das Nibelunglied* is killed, and two, Prince Nibelung and Hagen, are killed by Balmung itself. Woe be it to the unfortunate player who comes into possession of a sword with such a dangerous curse.

Other fine examples of fantasy-gaming motifs in ancient literature can be found in the legends of Charlemagne. The French *Chanson de Roland* and the Italian *Orlando Furioso* tell of Charlemagne's 12 Paladins, the most famous of whom are Orlando (Roland), Rinaldo, and Ogier the Dane. Readers of Tolkien would recognize many familiar elements in these ancient stories, among them dwarves, orcs, dragons, magic potions, sorcerers, and magic rings which turn their wearers invisible. Magic swords play an important role in these stories, and the most famous of these is Orlando's sword, Durindana (Durandal), which is said to be the blade used by Hector of Troy. Orlando won Durindana in a battle with a Saracen warrior, and discovered this blade to be so powerful that no armor could stand against it. Durindana had so much magical

power that it was said it could cleave the Pyrenees with one blow. When he was dying, Orlando tried to break Durindana to prevent it from falling into enemy hands, but he merely succeeded in splitting a boulder, leaving the magic sword unmarred.

Orlando had another magical sword, called Balisarda, which was fashioned by the enchantress Falerna so that no spells could avail against it. Balisarda could cut through even enchanted substances, and had such magical power that it could clear a path through a body of water. The other heroes of these legends also had great swords, including Rinaldo's Fusberta, Rogero's Belisarda (which was enchanted to cleave through armor) and Charlemagne's own Joyeuse.

Ogier the Dane also had an enchanted blade which rivaled Durindana for power. Blessed by faeries at birth, Ogier became a great warrior, and when he achieved knighthood, the faerie Morgana, ruler of the Isle of Avalon, gave Ogier a sword which had written on it that it was called Cortana, and was of the same temper and steel as Joyeuse and Durindana. In the hands of Ogier, Cortana fell on no one without inflicting a mortal wound. Ogier and Cortana were taken by Morgana to Avalon, where, in the company of another great hero, they await the day they are again needed.

This other hero is of course Arthur, King of Britain and rightful master of perhaps the most famous of all swords, Excalibur. In his

Historia Regum Britanniae, Geoffrey of Monmouth tells of Arthur and his great sword Caliburn, which, through the centuries (and the tellings of many writers) finally became, in the writing of Sir Thomas Malory, the great sword Excalibur, the symbol of Arthur's divine right to kingship.

Excalibur first came into Arthur's grasp when he pulled it from the stone and proved himself to be the son of Uther Pendragon. Later, after a fierce battle, Arthur once again comes into possession of Excalibur, this time from the Lady of the Lake. After killing Modred and receiving his own death wound, Arthur, like Orlando, is more concerned about his sword than anything else. He commands that it be thrown into the lake—and when his orders are finally obeyed, a hand rises out of the lake to grasp the great sword. The legends say that both Arthur and Excalibur repose on the Isle of Avalon, awaiting the day when England needs them once more.

The ancient heroic epics contain excellent source material for literary-minded players and DM's. Although Excalibur and Cortana are unavailable, who knows what happened to Hrunting, Cruaidin Calcideann, Balisarda, or Fusberta? Some legends say that Durindana was used by another great French hero, Joan of Arc, but who knows where it went from there? Perhaps some lucky character will wield Naegling anew—or if unlucky, be cursed by Balmung, and not live to see another battle.

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Minarian variants

Six suggestions from
"Divine Right" designer
G.Arthur Rahman

I: Settling special siege situations

Understandably, certain situations failed to come up in the process of playtesting Divine Right. As a result, they are not directly dealt with in the standard rules. One question in particular deserves special commentary. Namely, what happens to one's regulars and/or mercenaries if they are inside a castle of a kingdom that suddenly leaves their alliance?

Under most circumstances, units inside a defecting castle should immediately be displaced one hex outside the castle. However, should the castle be surrounded by besieging units and/or impassable hexes, the matter becomes more complex.

If the defecting castle containing foreign units should leave their alliance when a siege is going on, the besieger must immediately state whether he is continuing the siege or abandoning it. If he is continuing the siege, the kingdom containing the besieged castle immediately rejoins its former alliance. Now no conflict exists and the siege goes on as before.

If the defecting castle is not besieged and the foreign units inside it could not be displaced from its hex, no doubt it is surrounded by enemy combat units and/or impassable terrain. If the problem is impassable terrain, there is little hope for the hapless units and they are eliminated at the end of the owning player's combat phase. Assume the non-allied power has interned them for the duration of the campaigning season. If the problem is enemy units, the player surrounded inside the castle hex may attempt to fight a hex of enemy units and advance out of the castle. Should this maneuver fail, any units left inside a castle hex where they don't belong are interned (eliminated).

Leaders are not automatically eliminated. They may remain in a non-allied castle should they wish to risk the diplomatic penalty. If the optional rule of Free Passage/

Sanctuary is employed, even the diplomatic penalty may be avoided.

Seizing a castle from within

Through deactivation, forced peace and the treachery of Personality Card #12, a castle may leave the alliance to which units occupying it belong. When this happens, whether the castle is besieged or not, the player owning the foreign units must decide whether he will passively be displaced from the defecting castle (if this is possible), or commit himself to an attempt to seize the castle from within during his own siege phase.

To seize a castle from within, those combat units foreign to the defecting castle attack the intrinsic defense strength of the castle (foreign units fighting inside a defecting castle may not be aided in any way by friendly units outside the castle hex). The combat is conducted as if the intrinsic defense strength represented a stack of enemy units; figure the odds normally. For example, if three Immerite combat units stood inside the Muetarian castle of Pennol (intrinsic defense strength of 4) when it defected, they might assault it in their siege phase at odds of 1 to 2 (3 against 4 rounded in favor of the defender). Declaring an assault on a non-allied castle immediately causes the kingdom containing it to join the alliance of some other player (determined randomly). It is this player who rolls the dice in defense of the castle.

To successfully seize a castle from within, the attacker must eliminate all the intrinsic defense strength points in one attack. That is, if the Immerites in the above example should roll a 5 and the castle of Pennol should roll a 1 (modified to 2 by the odds), the castle would not fall because $5-2 = 3$, not sufficient to eliminate the four intrinsic defense strength points of the castle. In this case the defense strength of the castle re-

mains 4 and all the Immerite units are eliminated.

Had the Immerites instead rolled a 6, then they would have eliminated the intrinsic defense strength and turned Pennol into a zero-defense-strength castle, receiving no points for seizing it. However, a zero-rated castle is not identical to a plundered castle. Its walls are not breached; its militia is simply destroyed. A zero-rated castle still must be besieged if combat units defend inside it. In the example, the three Immerite units might be besieged in zero-rated Pennol, defending against siege with a strength of 3. No victory points are awarded for plundering a castle that has been reduced to a zero rating earlier in the game. Any unit may enter a zero-rated castle if it is not occupied by a combat unit. Any enemy unit begins a siege phase inside a zero-rated castle may plunder it simply by declaring it so. But remember, no victory points are awarded for zero-rated castles.

Leaders in non-allied and hostile castles

With respect to non-allied castles, leader units are allowed considerable freedom. Entering a non-allied kingdom will bring the diplomatic penalty down on the leader's alliance (unless he has been granted Free Passage/Sanctuary), but otherwise he may enter the castle without difficulty and enjoy the protection of its intrinsic defense strength.

A leader unit may also enter and leave a hostile castle, but in this case the castle is treated as if it were a stack of enemy combat units, and the leader requires a leader's fate die roll for both entrance and exit. Additionally, if the leader is standing in a hostile castle hex during the player turn of the alliance that controls the castle, he must take another fate roll—since the local constables are always on the lookout for undesirables.

II: An occasional ambush adds flavor to Combat

The standard combat system of *Divine Right* postulates a straightforward melee on level ground and provides for sundry surprises and turnabouts. But war is an occupation in Minaria, and its mighty warlords have mastered many tricks and stratagems. One tactic, the ambush, readily lends itself to variant rules.

History remembers many victories where smaller forces—well directed or knowing the ground of the battlefield—entrapped their opponents and routed them. In large part, Hannibal's victories were brilliant ambushes; the Roman renegade Sertorius combined his own ability with the terrain knowledge of his native troops to baffle the first-rate legions sent against him; during the Crusades, many European knights perished in Saracen traps.

Essentially, an ambush is a combat situation where an aggressor is intercepted at a location where the defender can place him at a disadvantage. The monarchs and the mercenary leaders of the Minarian kingdoms are no less ingenious than the men of Earth; their ambuscades can be simulated by the following rules.

THE AMBUSH

The defender in a land battle may attempt an ambush. However, an ambush is not possible if the defender has retreated or attempted to retreat.

After the phasing player has indicated a proposed attack, but before the combat dice are rolled, the defender may announce his desire to attempt one or more ambushes. For each combat situation in which he has not retreated his units, the defender may make a test die roll to determine whether his ambush is successful. If the modified roll of a single die equals "7" or more, the ambush succeeds. The die roll is modified according to the following specifications:

Ambusher's advantages

Add +1 if any of the defending stacks in a combat situation contains at least one qualified leader (one who can lead the units he is stacked with), also called an "ambush organizer." Obviously, leaders have more battle savvy than the simple sergeants and captains that (in theory) lead the combat units on the map. However, this advantage does not apply to certain monarchs—those with personalities #4 (the lazy wastrel), #6 (the unmilitary monarch) and #10 (the incompetent). If more than one leader in the

attacked stack(s) qualify, only one of them may be selected as an "ambush organizer."

Add +1 if the leader has a combat bonus. Since all such leaders also meet the qualifications of "ambush organizer," they automatically add +2 to the ambush-attempt die roll.

Add +1 if the "ambush organizer" has terrain advantages to match the type of terrain in his hex. Some leaders have both forest and mountain advantages. If the "ambush organizer" is a leader of this type and stands in a hex containing forest and mountains (or forest and hills), he modifies the die by +1 for each type of terrain; that is, by +2. Schardenzar has an unusual terrain advantage for rivers. If he is defending in a river hex, he receives an ambush-attempt modifier of +1 for the terrain.

Add +1 if the ambushing stack(s) contain at least one regular native to the country in which the regular is defending. Troops in their homeland benefit from knowing the ground. Additionally, many spies are available to mislead and misadvise an alien invader. For instance, if a Muetarian regular is attacked in Muetar, the defender may add +1 to his ambush-attempt die.

Add +1 if any of the attacking units are adjacent to combat units which are friendly to the ambusher, but which are not involved in any battle that player turn. This rule acknowledges that it is a foolish commander who exposes his flank to roving enemy forces.

All the modifiers above are cumulative. It is possible for a defender to have so many advantages in a given hex that ambush is certain. It is up to the attacker to not declare an attack when so much is against him.

Ambush victim's advantages

The defender/ambusher must also be aware of the attacker's advantages. If any of the conditions listed below are present, the chance to conduct a successful ambush is diminished. The defender subtracts from his ambush-attempt die roll according to the following specifications:

Subtract 1 if the victim's stack(s) have at least one qualified leader (excepting personalities #4, 6, and 10). An experienced leader is not easily taken unawares.

Subtract 1 if the victim's qualifying leader has a combat bonus. The more skillful a leader, the more able he is to detect the ruses of the enemy.

Subtract 1 if the attack is being made into a hex with terrain for which the attacker's (victim's) qualifying leader has a terrain ad-

vantage. If the leader has two types of advantages, both of which match the terrain types in the attacked hex, the ambusher subtracts 2 from his ambush-attempt die roll. The rule above includes Schardenzar attacking a river hex.

Subtract 1 if the attacker is attacking a hex with regulars belonging to the same country as the hex does. It is hard to ambush soldiers on their home ground.

Subtract 1 if the defender(s) are entirely surrounded by the attacker's combat units (all of which must actually be attacking). A surrounded defender has less chance for maneuver and secret deployment.

Sometimes an attacker's advantages will cancel out a defender's, making an ambush impossible.

The successful ambush

If the ambush-attempt die roll determines that the ambush is successful, the attack is carried out as per the standard rules, with this exception: The defender (ambusher) alone rolls a combat die; the attacker's combat die roll is automatically assumed to be "1". This automatic "1" can be modified by the odds, as per the standard rules. For example, an ambushed attacker who outnumbers the defender by 3 to 1 will add +2 to his automatic "1", rendering a combat "roll" of "3". An ambushed attacker still also receives any special leader and personality bonuses to which he is entitled as modifiers to his "roll."

OTHER RULES FOR LEADERS

The ambush rules above accent the role of the leader. This is intentional, since some players, in spite of incentives to the contrary built into the rules, are too timid or cautious to permit their monarchs to venture outside of strong castles. Using the ambush rules will make Minaria safer for campaigning monarchs, and will increase the losses of timid players who do not use leaders in open-field combat. The monarchs of Minaria are first and foremost warrior-kings; to treat them otherwise is a disservice to them. Other rules—which need not be appended to the ambush rules above—can be adopted to further encourage players to move their leaders boldly upon the campaign trail.

Do not award victory points for killed and captured monarchs. Let victory points come only from the other sources. The fear that one will benefit his opponent by exposing his monarchs to danger is the primary reason cautious players keep their monarchs ensconced in strong castles.

Assume that all kings benefit troop morale by virtue of their presence among their mercenaries and regulars, and add +1 to the owner's combat die roll in such cases. Leaders who already have a leader combat bonus may add +2 to the combat die roll. (This special advantage should be ignored when calculating the modifiers for the ambush-attempt die roll).

III: For your playing pleasure...

The use of treasure in Divine Right diplomacy and military affairs can be incorporated into the game by the use of treasure points. Consider this treasure to be coin, jewels, plate and other typical articles. Treasure points should be represented by chits displayed on the map; there is no limit on the amount of treasure which may be in play at any one time. The sources and uses for treasure in *Divine Right* are many. Players are urged to accept any or all suggested sources and uses that will enhance their own brand of play.



Sources of treasure

- 1) The player receives 1 t.p. (treasure point), placed under one of the owner's units anywhere on the map, if he rolls "7" on the random events die roll.

2) He receives another 1 t.p. under any one of his units on the map if he has the wealthy Dwarves in his alliance, on the same random events die roll of "7".

3) He receives, in the ruins of any castle he plunders, 1 t.p. for each intrinsic defense strength point of the castle immediately upon plundering it.

4) He may, if using the Spinning Wheel, take a mercenary unit, as per the standard rules, or instead take 1 t.p., placed under the monarch using the Spinning Wheel.

5) He may receive t.p.'s from any hexes adjacent to the Isle of Fright (a graveyard of many ships) which are occupied by at least one friendly fleet. He rolls a die in each stack's combat phase to test a hex for treasure discovery; upon the roll of "6", 1 t.p. is deployed under the fleet(s) in the hex. A fleet cannot search for treasure if it has engaged in combat in the same game turn.

6) He may receive 2 t.p. for maintaining a "blockade" (i.e., keeping at least one fleet within a two-hex range) of certain special, unplundered ports, namely Colist, Zefnar, Parros and Castle Lapspell. Besieging

ships may serve as blockaders at the same time. In each combat phase the blockading player rolls a die to test for treasure-fleet interception. On a roll of "6", the blockaders have captured treasure from enemy merchant ships and 2 t.p. are placed in their hex. There is no additional treasure award for occupying more than one hex within range of the same port. A fleet that engages in combat may not intercept merchant ships in the same turn.

7) He may receive 2 t.p. at a time for excavating the ancient Tombs of Olde with at least one land combat unit. In each combat phase, upon the roll of "6", 2 t.p. are deployed under the excavating unit. However, as the Tombs hold many terrible curses, the roll of "1" in the die test will cause the elimination of one excavating unit, and generate such fear that no regular of the same kingdom will ever dare enter the Tombs again. Units that engage in combat cannot search for treasure in the same game turn.

8) He may receive 1 t.p. for excavating the buried city of Letho in the Mires of the

IV: 'The men are awaiting your command, sir'

This Divine Right variant attempts to simulate tactical leadership in a game where all leaders do not have equal ability. It should motivate good commanders to come out of their castles—while the bad ones have a compelling reason for staying inside.

Each leader is assigned a Tactical Expertise for land combat. Once an Expertise is known for a certain leader, it remains unchanged for the remainder of the game and should be recorded in a side note. Expertise varies from Class A (the best) to Class E (the worst). To determine the Tactical Expertise of a leader—including a player monarch—roll a die and add or subtract any modifications which are called for. A modified roll of 0 or 1 yields Class E expertise; a roll of 2, Class D; a roll of 3 or 4, Class C; a roll of 5, Class B; and a roll of 6 or more, Class A.

Certain leaders have a fixed expertise of Class A. These include Juulute Wolfheart, the Black Knight, Schardenzar, the monarch with Personality #16, and any monarch with the Helm of Wisdom.

By their nature, several other Personalities yield a greater or lesser chance of having a high Expertise. Add +1 to the Expertise die roll for monarchs with Personalities #1 and 19. Subtract 1 from the Expertise die roll for monarchs with Personalities #2, 4 and 14. Subtract 2 from the Expertise die rolls for monarchs with Personalities #6 and 10.

When a leader is given an Expertise, the normal combat bonus for leaders is *not* awarded. Units without a leader are automatically rated Class E. If a monarch dies, his successor is randomly assigned a new Expertise.

The Tactical Decision Selection Chart

Once a leader's Expertise for land combat has been determined, one assesses the general situation of the battle in which he is involved, on the attack or defense. Then each player rolls a die on the Tactical Decision Selection Chart and consults the column under the letter representing his leader's Expertise (or column E, if units have no leader). The die roll is not modified for any reason. The abbreviation to the left of the slash represents the leader's choice for this combat sequence if he is attacking; the abbreviation to the right of the slash represents the leader's choice if he is on the defense.

Tactical Decision Selection Chart

Die Roll	E	D	C	B	A
1	FC/DF	FC/DF	RA/RD	RA/RD	SK/OR
2	FC/DF	RA/RD	RA/RD	SK/OR	F/CC
3	RA/RD	RA/RD	SK/OR	F/CC	FA/CA
4	RA/RD	SK/OR	F/CC	FA/CA	E/A
5	SK/OR	F/CC	FA/CA	E/A	E/A
6	F/CC	FA/CA	E/A	E/A	E/A

Definitions:

FC:	Fall into confusion	DF:	Disorganized flight
RA:	Reckless assault	RD:	Rigid defense
SK:	Skirmish	OR:	Orderly retreat
F:	Frontal assault	CC:	Counter-charge
FA:	Flanking attack	CA:	Coordinated counter attack
E:	Envelopment		
		A:	Ambush

The Tactical Selection Resolution Matrix

Cross-index the tactical decisions of the attacker and defender. The number derived represents the modification on the die roll of the *attacker*. The combat may also be modified by the effect of combat odds, magic devices, terrain, etc. The attacker's selection is read horizontally. The defender's selection is read from the vertical. NC means "No combat possible."

	FC	RA	SK	F	FA	E
DF	NC	+2	+1	+2	+3	+4
RD	-1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+3
OR	NC	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2
CC	-2	-1	-1	+0	+2	+3
CA	-3	-2	-2	-1	+0	+1
A	-4	-3	-3	-2	-1	+0

In order to encourage more leaders to lead attacks themselves, players may optionally eliminate victory point awards that result from the slaying or capture of monarchs.

If units have the same Expertise, players may conduct combat in the standard manner instead of using the tactical charts.

...some rules about treasure

Sinking Kind with at least one combat unit. This is done in the same manner as excavating the Tombs of Olde, but there is no curse in Letho to drive the excavators off.

9) Every player king starts the game with some treasure, determined randomly by a die roll: "1-3": 1 t.p.; "4-5": 2 t.p.; "6": 3 t.p. Deposit this treasure in the royal castle.

Restrictions on treasure

To transport treasure, a player must move it in the company of a combat unit. Treasure may not be used for any purpose until it has been deposited in a friendly castle. Afterwards it may be moved again, but may not be used ("spent") while in transit.

Mercenaries and barbarians are too untrustworthy to haul treasure. Any treasure in a non-plundered castle hex stacked only with unled mercenaries or barbarians is stolen (eliminated). However, a leader, if one is present who is capable of leading the mercenaries or barbarians, can prevent theft.

Additionally, if barbarians are present among the besieging units when a castle falls, the player receives only half the pos-

sible treasure (rounded up). He receives none if all the siegers are barbarians.

If any treasure is stored in a castle that falls to siege, all of it is captured by the besieger. Treasure in a besieged castle cannot be destroyed by the besieger. At other times (such as when a siege seems imminent) it may be eliminated by the owner by simply removing the t.p. counter(s) from the map.

Treasure may not retreat, on land or at sea. It remains behind if the owning unit retreats and is automatically captured by any attacking unit advancing into the hex after combat. If treasure is left alone on land or sea at other times, it is assumed to be lost or sunken. An appropriate search test is made by a combat unit which later occupies the hex; the treasure is found on a roll of "6" in the combat phase, similar to the procedure described under sources #5,6,7 and 8.

Uses of treasure

1) To augment diplomacy; treasure may be expended in conjunction with a diplomacy card. To modify the die roll by +1,

expend (eliminate) 2 t.p. To modify the die by +2, expend 4 t.p. Treasure may not modify the die roll by more than +2.

2) To insure that barbarians do not slay your ambassador; expend 2 t.p. prior to making a recruitment die roll. This expenditure has no other effect than to prevent the execution of the ambassador.

3) To recruit mercenary units directly; expend 1 t.p. in the random events phase to recruit one land army; expend 2 t.p. to recruit a fleet. Only one unit may be recruited with treasure per player turn.

4) To bribe captured mercenary leaders into defection; expend 1 t.p. and roll the forced peace die roll, modifying it by +1. The die is not modified by more than +1 no matter how much treasure is used.

5) To stiffen an allied monarch's resistance to deactivation; deploy 3 t.p. into any castle(s) of his kingdom to subtract "1" from all enemy ambassadors' die rolls attempting deactivation. To subtract "2", deploy 6 t.p. Once given to a monarch, the treasure may not be expended again for other pur-

(Continued on next page)

V: 'But, sir ...they just can't march any further'

The movement allowances in *Divine Right* do not represent what an army could accomplish if it did nothing but march sunup to sundown. It takes into account delays called for by foraging, inefficiency, confusion of orders, bad weather, etc. Many times the need to join a siege or make a crucial attack is of such urgency that an army can manage to squeeze out a little more marching time, albeit at the risk of losing combat efficiency and stragglers. To take into account this reality, the following variant rules are offered.

During the phasing player's turn, any number of his stacks and/or leader units may attempt a forced march. However, units that did not move as a stack in the normal movement phase cannot engage in forced march as a single stack. Any number of different stacks may attempt to add forced-march movement points to their normal movement allowances. However, each stack requires a separate forced-march-attempt die test.

All normal movement must be concluded before the phasing player attempts forced march for any of his stacks. The player begins his forced-march subphase by pointing out the first stack that he will attempt to march, and how many movement points he wants to try to gain. He then rolls 1d6 and consults the Forced March Attempt Table. If a stack is unable to use all of the forced-march movement points it has gained, the unused points are lost. In any

case, the stack still suffers the "*", A, B, C" results called for.

The forced march die roll can be modified by several factors:

Add +1 to the die roll if the stack is under command of the same leader unit for the entire movement and forced march phase.

Add +1 if the stack will forced march through friendly allied hexes only.

Add +1 if the marching units are either Trolls or Dwarves. These are particularly hearty races, suited for long-distance travel. If any units of different races (mercenaries included) are stacked with the Trolls or Dwarves, a forced-march attempt is rolled for them as a separate stack (should they wish to also attempt forced march).

Subtract 1 if the stack will march through any wasteland hexes (colored brown on the map) or through the particularly hostile or barren countries: Shucassam, Pon, Zorn or the Shards of Lor.

FORCED MARCH ATTEMPT TABLE

Number of forced march movement points desired

Die	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	1	1	2
2	1-A	1-A	1	2*	3-A*
3	1	1	2*	2	3-A
4	1	2*	2	3-B*	4-C*
5	1	2-A	3-B*	3-A	4-B
6	1	2	3-A	4-C*	5-C*
7+	1	2	3	4-A	5-A

"*" — Moving stack loses 1 combat unit

"A" — Troops fatigued; any attacks in which they take part this player-turn require a subtract of 1 on the combat die roll.

"B" — Troops exhausted; they may not take part in any attacks this turn.

"C" — Troops in disarray; for the remainder of the game turn, 1 is subtracted from all defensive and retreat dice rolls involving these units. They, of course, may not launch an offensive



If a "*" result is scored by a leader unit on forced march unaccompanied by combat units, he rolls another test die and perishes on a roll of "1". A leader traveling with friendly combat units is not affected by "*" in any way.

With the above rules in effect, that all-important stack of relieving units only need a bit of luck to arrive in the nick of time. Nor can your opponent now carry out his dastardly schemes with the certain knowledge that you can never get there in time to stop him.

poses. It may be moved around within the kingdom, but if the treasure is eliminated, lost or captured, its benefits are lost. The Usurper is not influenced in any way by treasure.

6) To instantly replace an eliminated regular; expend 2 t.p. in the random events phase to replace a land army; expend 3 t.p. to replace a fleet. Replacements are purchased after the random events die roll.

7) To increase your ambassador's chance to assassinate; expend 3 t.p. before making the assassination die roll, representing bribery of guards and intimates of the monarch, to add +1 to the roll.

8) To help an imprisoned monarch escape; expend any number of t.p.'s, then roll a die. If the result is equal to or less than the

number of t.p. expended, you have bribed the prison guards. To complete the escape, make a leader fate die roll. On a roll of 2-5, the monarch may exit the castle to the full extent of his movement allowance. On a roll of "6" he is instantly recaptured (no victory points awarded); on a roll of "1" he is killed trying to escape (victory points are awarded).

9) To ransom a captured leader; negotiate a desirable ransom with the captor-player and pay him the t.p.'s. He must deploy the t.p.'s in the castle where the king is imprisoned, then return the prisoner, who is placed by his owner in any friendly stack or castle.

10) To influence other player kings; treasure may be transported across the

map to the troops or castle of another player king as a gift or bribe for any agreed purpose. Brought adjacent to the troops/castle, the treasure is transferred directly, with the receiver's permission. No promise bought with treasure need be kept.

If a kingdom deactivates, all treasure within its unbesieged castles is lost. The treasure in besieged castles within a deactivated kingdom vanishes when the siege is lifted, or is captured by the besieger if the castle falls.

Treasure inside a besieged castle may not be expended for any purpose; such treasure may continue to "stiffen" an ally's resistance to deactivation, if it was so utilized before the siege.

VI: All Barbarians aren't played the same way

The standard rules of *Divine Right* recognize no difference between the Barbarians of the north of the map and those of the south. Northern and southern Barbarians may stack together and be led by the same leader, Juulute Wolfheart. Barbarian territory at both sides of the map may be trespassed upon without regard to the fierce nomads which inhabit it. While these rules are justifiable in the interest of simplicity, it is possible to look at the Barbarian situation in another way.

Barbarian incompatibility

The Barbarians of the Wild Reaches and Blown Over are a people very different from those who dwell south of the Withering and Blasted Heath (a region we shall refer to as "the Barbarian Frontier"). These two groups of Barbarians probably have less contact with one another than each has with the civilized Minarian nations lying between them. Therefore, players must make a definite choice of the Barbarian type they wish to recruit. An alliance, at any one moment of the game, may control either Northern Barbarians or Frontier Barbarians, not both types at the same time. If a player is in control of some Northern Barbarians, he must remove these from the map before he attempts to recruit any Frontier Barbarians, and vice versa.

Barbarian leadership

Juulute Wolfheart is a Northern Barbarian, born and bred. The peoples and ways of the southern Frontier are not his own. Consequently, Juulute Wolfheart shall not lead nor stack with Frontier Barbarians in this variant. Instead, the Barbarians of the south have their own leader, Macombi Spearslayer.

Macombi Spearslayer is the kagan of the loose confederacy of tribes that inhabits the Barbarian Frontier. Only Macombi may lead Barbarians recruited in the south hexrow of the map. As long as Macombi is stacked with no more than ten Barbarian

units, no player can recruit Barbarians out of Macombi's stack. If Macombi stacks with eleven or more Barbarian units at one time, any number of them may be recruited away. No enemy-controlled stack of Frontier Barbarians will attack a stack led by Macombi. Friendly leaders may stack with Frontier Barbarians if (and only if) Macombi leads the stack.

Players should make Macombi both a counter and a special mercenary diplomacy card. Macombi enters play in any brown-colored hex on the south edge of the map. He cannot lead either regulars or mercenary combat units.

Barbarian territory

All brown hexes in the last two hexrows on either side of the map represent territories inhabited by Barbarians. They resent the intrusion of alien people into their range. Therefore, non-Barbarian units (and Barbarian units from the other side of the map) are subject to possible non-player attack when crossing into Barbarian territory.

For each hex entered by the alien units, a die is rolled. If the result of the roll equals or exceeds the number of combat units entering the hex, that number of Barbarians (from the unused units in the Barbarian pool) is deployed adjacent to the alien units. The units must stop and attack the newly deployed non-player Barbarians.

If the alien stack's attack is successful (that is, if it loses no units), the non-player Barbarians are returned to the pool and the alien stack may continue movement up to the remainder of its movement allowance. For the rest of the turn this stack is not subject to another non-player Barbarian attack.

If the alien stack's attack is unfavorable (if it loses units in the combat exchange), it takes losses normally and must cease movement for the remainder of the turn. The non-player Barbarians are again returned to the pool.

If an alien stack remains in Barbarian territory through its friendly movement phase without moving, one test die is rolled for a possible non-player Barbarian attack and three is added to the resulting number.

If there are insufficient unused Barbarian units in the pool to equal the number of alien units due for a non-player attack, no non-player attack can be mounted against them.

If a combat result leads to the capture of a leader by Barbarians, that leader is placed at the Sacred Stones (by Northern Barbarian captors) or in the extreme southeastern hex of the map (by Frontier Barbarian captors). A captured leader cannot leave the imprisoning hex until alien combat units enter it (either friendly or enemy).

Leaders (other than Juulute Wolfheart in the northern territory, Macombi Spearslayer on the Frontier, and the monarch holding the Mask of Influence in either territory) traveling through the Barbarian territories are subject to possible capture. For each two hexes (round up) that a leader enters in a turn, a leader fate die is rolled. On a 1-5 there is no effect; on a "6" the leader is captured.

If the imprisonment hex is already occupied by alien combat units, the captive is not imprisoned there. Instead, the non-player Barbarians slay him immediately.

By these rules, stacks of seven combat units or more (if traveling) and stacks of ten or more units (if standing still in Barbarian territory throughout the movement phase) are immune to non-player Barbarian attacks. Stacks and leaders traveling in company with Juulute Wolfheart (in the north) and Macombi Spearslayer (in the south) are also safeguarded against non-player attack. Note: The Dwarves of Aws Noir have a treaty of safe passage in the Wild Reaches. As a result, leaders and units traveling with Aws Noir regulars cannot be attacked by non-player Barbarians in that area.



The Black Hand

by Glenn Rahman

The Tower of Zards has borne an evil reputation since pre-Cataclysmic times. When he rose against Lloroi rule, the Scarlet Witch King raised the mighty Tower with demonic aid and braced its stones with potent magicks. Its ruins stood tall despite the devastating upheavals of the Cataclysm. The barbarous survivors of the deceased civilization shunned the witch-built citadel. None cared to dwell in the shadow of its cliff-founded walls, lit from within by a lurid glare whose source was neither the sun nor moon nor stars. The nomads called the tower "Zards," a word of their tongue that translates as "Evil."

For twelve hundred years the castle stood; those few who trespassed upon it figure in the most terrifying legends of doom. Located far from any civilized state, the Tower was known to the outside world only through the tales of an occasional traveler or trader from the barbarian territories. Doubtless it would have long remained thus, had not a strange intruder appeared in the Shards of Lor.

Early in the twelfth century, a remnant of a Goblin raiding party came straggling back to the Nithmere Mountains. They told a ghastly tale of howling specters amuck in the Shards of Lor.

Shortly afterwards the rumor was confirmed by Dwarven prospectors in the days of their sagely monarch Alcuin. The Dwarves had spied upon a wraithlike being at the ancient battlefield of the Wasted Dead, where long ago the Witch King's Scarlet Army had gone down to defeat. The wizard-for such he, she or it was—walked a circled path in the dust where the magic-slain dead uneasily lay. Hissing an invocation, the mage struck a bone against the ground. The earth commenced to crumble and a thousand soiled skeletons grew

from it like proliferating weeds. The wraith-being gave a curt command and the skeleton army fell in ranks around him, like the flesh-and-blood soldiers they once had been.

A new tenant inhabited the ancient Tower of Zards—a shadowy wonder-worker who possessed the glamour to command the dead. The wraith-being had no name to give out and an appearance so strange that even "his" gender could not be guessed with certainty. The barbarians called him the Black Hand, and so he came to be known throughout Minaria. Physical descriptions of the Black Hand are rare: the diarist Codew, a courtier in the palace of Pennol, calls him: "a black, gaunt lich in crumbling mummy wrappings, whose details of visage were obscured by a dark mist that clung to his angular frame."

Opinion holds that the magician emerged from the east. No document or authoritative legend supports this guess; in Minaria most things unknown and unexplainable are attributed to the east. The ancient records are barren in regard to that region, other than to recount the legend that the Lloroi fled from the east during a war of gods and demons. Nor has modern exploration dispelled the myth of the haunted east. A forbidding mountain range called the Wall of Aermac turns back all but the most intrepid traveler. Dwarven prospecting expeditions dispatched east failed dismally and the survivors brought back tales of "twisted and deformed folk," giant beasts and lethal curses. Neither does eastern knowledge come to Minaria via the trading voyages of Mivior and Rombune. The southern subcontinent of Girion is vast and the sealanes are dominated by the hostile Scarlet Empire. The Muetarian scholar Asiongabur, who compiled a collection of

Black Hand legends entitled Lord of the Dead, rejects the eastern-origin theory. He believes instead that the Black Hand rose from the Tower of Zards itself, an undying demon or mummy imprisoned since the fall of the Scarlet Witch King.

For the first few decades after his appearance, the Black Hand remained secluded in the Shards of Lor. The sight of his undead servants shuffling stiffly over the frosted rocks taught the races of Minaria to shun the necromancer's domain like a curse.

The Black Hand stepped into the outer world with devastating impact in 1248. The Goblin Gronek became warchief of the Mangubat tribe upon the sudden death of his brother Whynaucht. The ambitious Gronek aspired to extend the range of his people into the uninhabited Shards of Lor, from where raids might be mounted against the Dwarven principalities. He had heard of the Black Hand, but either dismissed the mage as a charlatan or esteemed his own conjuring powers overmuch. Leading his warriors through the Shards of Lor, Gronek beat upon the lofty barbican of Zards and demanded the magician's homage.

For reasons known only to himself, the Black Hand deigned not to hurl his undead servitors against the invaders, but instead appeared on a high balcony. The Goblin lord shouted up at him impudently, demanding submission and tribute.

From the shrouded wraith there tumbled down a hoarse, hollow voice like a reverberance from the tomb: "I will bring you your tribute in the dark of the moon!"

Pleased with himself and relieved that an assault on the tower was unnecessary, Gronek withdrew to the forest of Leeks to await the arrival of his newest subject.

In the starless dark of the next new moon, the scouts rushed into Gronek's encampment and beat a frightened alarm on the bronze warning gong. The aroused Goblins scrambled out of their sleeping rolls and rushed armed to the perimeter of the village.

An awed hush fell over the Goblins. No attackers were descending on the encampment, but tribute-bearing servants instead—servants like the Goblins had never seen before.

At the head of the procession shuffled a troop of hawk-beaked creatures with stringy simian hair—ghouls from the dreaded Poison Desert of Yng-go. In their shaggy arms they bore open casks of sardonyx, jacinth and lapis lazuli that glinted in the torchlight like a million devilish eyes.

As the ghouls proceeded by, a fiendish screech descended from the air above. Small, dark bodies on leathery wings plummeted out of the black sky, driving the Goblins back by their terrifying demeanor. As they alighted, the air filled with the odor of the sepulcher, for held in their clawed feet were cannisters of rare funerary incenses and embalmer's spices: myrrh, cassia and

every type of aromatic. These grotesque winged creatures were the half-legendary gargoyle, denizens of the distant Wastes of Folmar. They scanned the trembling crowd balefully, then carried their burdens into the heart of the village.

After the gargoyle came other beings, these with a dull, uneven step. They represented many races and both sexes, all of whose faces were frozen in slack-mouthed stares. They were zombies all, nobles and rich merchants mixed with mutilated soldiers and beggars in filthy rags. Some

seemed newly dead; others were far gone into corruption. In their rotting fingers they clutched baskets of blood-red rubies and carbuncles. The host of Goblins released a few sporadic screams but a numbed silence dominated the village.

Scarcely had the undead staggered by than there sounded the clatter of bones. Uncloaked by the night, earth-darkened skeletons approached with an insectlike tread. The skeletons were swathed in kilts of gold brocade with buckles of topaz. On their grinning skulls they wore turbans of

black silk, starred with emeralds. Lights like flickering marsh fires burned within the hollow bones, while black tongues like those of long-dead men dangled over their jagged teeth. They carried jeweled scimitars and shields, looking like a demonic guard of honor.

All eyes turned to the covered palanquin they escorted. Framed of gilded wood, it was carried by a dozen soiled mummies. Tiaras circling their grey, withered heads suggested a bygone rank, belied by the crumbling wrappings they wore and the teeming parasites that feasted on their dried flesh. From the shroud-covered palanquin issued a voice that Gronek had heard but once before: "This is the first portion of what is owed you. Is Gronek of the Mangubats pleased?"

"Is more to follow?" replied the warchief bewilderedly.

"Draw back the curtains of my palanquin," said the concealed speaker.

Gronek ordered his varlets to the litter, but they stood paralyzed in awe. Invoking all the power of his gods, Gronek descended from his chair and himself tore away the fluttering shroud cloth. The sight he revealed struck Gronek like a blow to the chest. Within sat not the Black Hand, but one whom the warchief knew well.

The dark and corrupted features of Gronek's dead brother Whynaucht regarded him hatefully. "Brother," rasped Whynaucht, "you are my murderer and a thief upon my chair. May your name be cursed for an eternity before your people and the gods you misserve!"

Gronek howled and plunged into the woods, never to return. The Goblins say he lived out his days in madness, running naked along the forest paths and eating moss like a beast.

Afterwards, the Black Hand resumed his seclusion in the Shards of Lor. But if he had hoped that his punishment of Gronek would force outsiders to respect his privacy, the necromancer miscalculated. Men who heard the Goblins' story denigrated the power of the Black Hand while exaggerating his wealth in gems and gold. Adventurers lusty for his horde trespassed repeatedly upon the Shards of Lor, either alone, in small bands or in strong brigand gangs. Few of such types returned and fewer still brought back any material reward.

An often-repeated legend from Basimar recounts the adventure of the warrior-maid Ashera and her band of bravos. They ventured into the Shards of Lor seeking the wizard's gold, undaunted by the zombie sentinels they encountered and dispatched with enchanted blades. In the brown twilight they sighted the ruinous stronghold of Zards on the grim, piled scraps. Wizard fires flickered weirdly behind its long embrasure.

Ashera led her band up an avalanche of fallen blocks and peered into the tower through an unpatched gap in the ancient

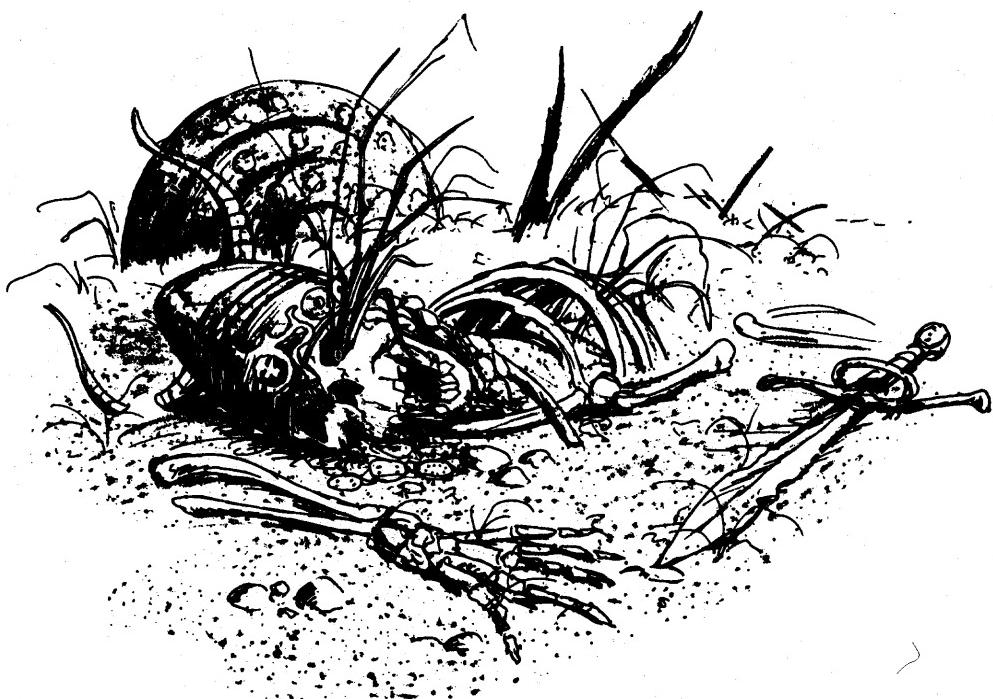


tives with vengeance, but a thunderous series of crashes among the trees interrupted their executions.

There loomed in the starlit sky the rude outlines of a giant. Its flared nose was like a hill planted in the center of a broad field; its eyes were overhung by lids the size of curtains. Its flesh was as blue as a long-dead cadaver and the stench of it sickened the onlookers below. The Goblins broke and fled, but the monster paid them no heed; with a ponderous turn, it stumbled off in pursuit of the main body of barbarians. Ever afterwards the Goblins considered the woods where the Colussus first made its appearance bad luck; general usage changed the area's name to the Cursed Forest.

Since the Great Barbarian War the Black Hand has intermittently interrupted his experiments with periods of military activity. Cynics say that the necromancer is less interested in the goings-on of Minarian politics than in the opportunity to practice his death magic upon thousands of corpses without too much offending his mundane neighbors.

Today we know little more about the Black Hand than did the Dwarves when they first saw him, more than two centuries ago. By his silence he announces he has nothing to teach the mundane world; by his actions he proves he is interested in no living thing of it.



The remains of a stalwart soldier, perhaps soon to be 'drafted' into service by the Black Hand.

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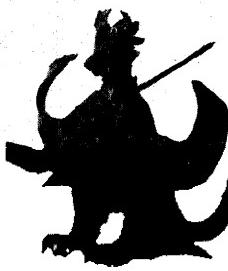


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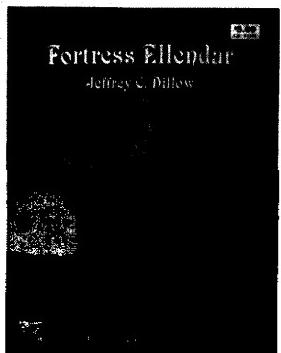
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masonry. The spectacle they beheld remained beyond their comprehension for long minutes: The whole ground floor of the tower had been hollowed out to make a chamber of awesome vastness. The demolition had been a superhuman task for which the necromancer must have enlisted the aid of legions of demons and familiars. Thick black vapors wormed their way out of a cauldron that was nothing less than the whole of the subterranean dungeon of the stronghold, filled with a noxious recipe the volume of which would have overflowed a lake bed. All about the rim of the cauldron writhed the necromancer's nightmare creations, while the hollow of the vault swam with flapping creatures, resembling bats and birds of prey, but being in fact sorcerous creations not of the natural world.

As they watched, the adventurers learned the incredible, soul-searing secret of the unimaginably monstrous and blasphemous project of the Black Hand. As they watched, the dark mists above the lake of brew twisted together like hibernating serpents and took on a kind of quasi-solidity. Before their stupefied gaze, a demon of horrifying size and features took shape. One of the intruders shook off his stupor to wail in terror and throw himself to his death on the mountainside below. The creatures below turned laboriously toward the direction of the shout, and Ashera knew they had been discovered. She shouted for her companions to follow as she clambered down the mound of rubble. As the yells of the hindmost echoed in her ears, Ashera saw the flash of wings and toppled into unconsciousness as a cudgel clanked upon her helm.

At length Ashera awoke. She found herself in a luxurious room and wearing not armor, but gorgeous silken raiments. The air tingled with the scent of flowers and aromatic food; upon a table a sumptuous meal and bouquet waited for her. Rising with alarm from her couch, Ashera searched the room for an exit but found none. Suddenly she sensed herself being watched and turned to face a mirror built into the tapestried wall.

The glass cast back not her own reflection, but that of a young gentleman in a cloak and jaunty hat. "Who are you?" she demanded.

"I am the lord of this castle," the image replied. He explained that his servants had found her unconscious in the forest and brought her hither. She was welcome to stay as long as she desired.

"I do not desire to stay anywhere where I am a prisoner!" she answered irascibly.

"Nonetheless, you must remain," the young man said plaintively, and faded from the glass. Angered by being abandoned before she had had all of her say, Ashera grasped a chair and shattered the mirror into a thousand pieces.

Instantly the room changed. The tapesries and furnishing vanished, leaving

rough, algae-caked stone and a few benches of unfinished wood. The dainty meal upon the silver trays became cuttings of fungus and roots on wooden platters. Ashera's gown faded away to be replaced by a tattered shroud. The sweet air fled, replaced by the heavy stench of mildew and decay.

Behind the shattered mirror was revealed a corridor, down which Ashera raced. Somehow she managed to descend an outer wall and escape into the forest. For days she fled across wet and cold woods and hills, meeting an occasional woods-



An artifact alleged to be from the Tower of Zards

man's family or adventurer to whom she told her story. But always, upon stopping to rest, she would hear the shout of her name, "Ashera!", by a hoarse voice that vaguely resembled that of the man in the mirror.

Then, as Ashera fled along the pathless depths of Shadow Wood, wolves attacked and devoured her. The Black Hand arrived at the site of her death too late to save her; in grief, he placed a dreadful curse on the wolves of Shadow Wood. He laid the bane of intelligence upon them. Robbed of their innocence, the wolves henceforth knew good from evil and anguished over evil's

continual triumphs. They understood the logic of gain and fought fierce wars for material possessions. Worse, they realized they were mortal and the awareness of age and death drained their days of their former peace and beauty. Of the truth of this legend we can offer no documentary proof, as the wolves of Shadow Wood do not esteem writing. One must either accept their oral tradition or call it mythology.

The Black Hand's behavior changed markedly after Ashera's death. He enticed an occasional mortal into his domain to act as his liaison with the outside world. Before long, most of the kings of Minaria recognized the advantages of maintaining good relations with a necromancer so powerful.

Afterwards, on irregular occasions, the Black Hand would accept alliance with one or another of the Minarian monarchs. He sewed them well with his hosts of zombies and skeletons and flying carrion familiars, which could appear in numbers so vast that their approach could block out the sun and fill enemy hearts with terror.

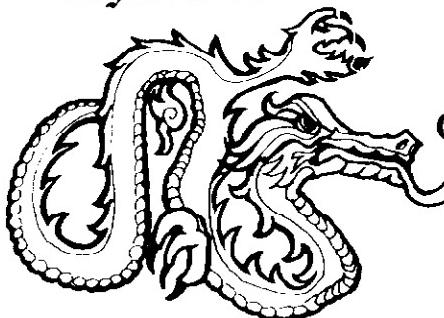
In the last decade of the thirteenth century the Great Chief Sagaradu Black Hammer led the northern barbarians in a war of conquest against Goblin Land. Minor bands swept the flanks and entered the Shards of Lor. They approached the tower, but were routed by the mere appearance of the gigantic Guardian demon that Ashera had seen being conjured decades before. When it suited his purpose, the Black Hand sent his hordes against their encampment. The necromancer tested his newest spell by opening the portal to the ghost world, and let the yowling souls of the damned careen through the undisciplined mobs. The panicked warriors fled north and did not trouble the residents of the Shards of Lor for many years to come.

Shortly afterwards, an ambassador arrived from Goblin Land. The Goblin people stood on the brink of being overwhelmed. They had finally ended their intertribal quarrels and elected a single warchief for all Zorn, Ockwig, who called himself the Sir-dar. But his embassies had been rebuffed throughout the Goblin-hating north and Zorn's last hope was to beg the alliance of the mysterious Black Hand.

As the weeks passed and the Goblin ambassadors brought back no good news, Ockwig drew up his last credible army to meet the barbarians in Stone Toad Forest and exhorted his troops to begin the Death Song. It was better, Ockwig thought, to seek death against an enemy's spears than to take flight and live in disgraceful exile. As the Goblins were sharpening their blades against their oil stones, a clamor arose behind the barbarian watchfires. Suddenly the barbarian invaders began to shout—not a warcry, but a wild chorus of fear. From out of the night forest the barbarians came charging, throwing aside their weapons in a frenzy while trying to escape some unknown terror. The Goblins fell upon the fugi-

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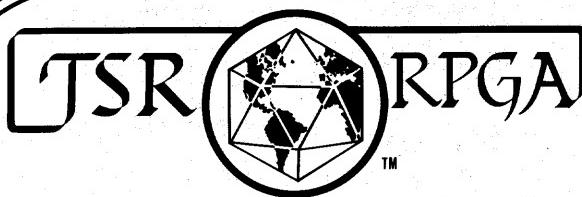
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Dragon's Bestiary



Gaund

Gaund are reptilian creatures that scramble about on all fours, rising to their hind legs only in mating, combat, and to survey their surroundings. When so erect, they use their tails for balance. Their skin is scaled and leathery, grey-green in color. Being omnivorous, Gaund husband food carefully, often maintaining breeding colonies of lesser animals to ensure themselves of a plentiful supply. Communicating in a language of singing clicks and hollow whistling sounds, Gaund lair in groups of up to twenty in dry, fiery caverns. They are rarely found in cool climates, or above ground.

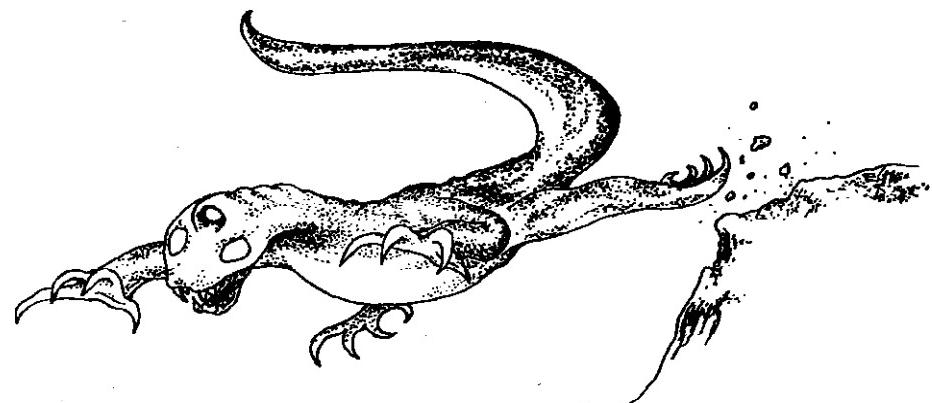
In combat, Gaund leap about constantly, hurling themselves at and upon targets and using their tails as rams or whips (for 1-8 points of damage). They are fearless, and the death of a fellow will often drive them to fight with greater ferocity. Unless pinned down or caught from behind, Gaund do not use their rear claws in battle. (The powerful kicks they will employ in such special situations do 3-12 points of damage.)

The most feared attack of the Gaund is the "ray" or gaze effect of its central eye. This orb, protected by a bony hood (which narrows the field of vision so that the Gaund must aim its head to employ the gaze), produces a magical *Heat Metal* effect within a range of 3".

Gaund suffer no damage from heat, steam (even that of a Dragon Turtle) or normal fire. Magical fire attacks do less damage to them (-2 on all dice) than is

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
NO. APPEARING: 1-20
ARMOR CLASS: 6
MOVE: 15"
HIT DICE: 4+4
% IN LAIR: 30%
TREASURE TYPE: Q (x4)
NO. OF ATTACKS: 4

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4/1-6/1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
INTELLIGENCE: Average
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
SIZE: M
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*



the norm. Gaund avoid water although it does them no harm, and are markedly susceptible to cold-based attacks (+2 on all dice).

The excellent 7" infravision, hearing, and sensitivity to vibrations of Gaund preclude their being effectively blinded by smoke or vapors (even that produced by spells such as *Pyrotechnics* and *Cloud-kill*, and by creatures such as the Nightmare). They are also rarely (1 on a d6) surprised.

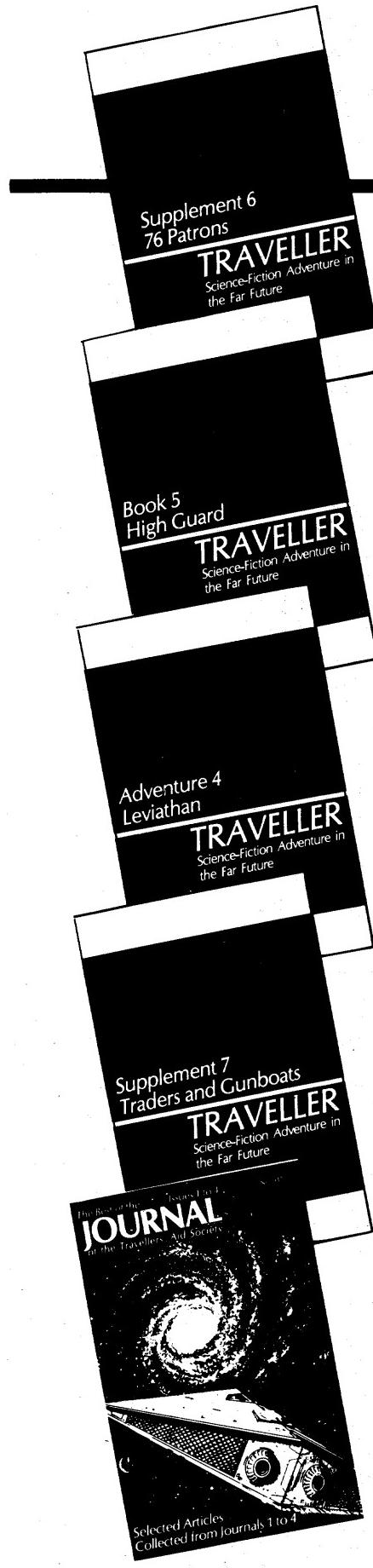
Gaund are hermaphroditic. Mating rituals have been observed to include an upright, shuffling head-to-head dance. The skin of the pregnant specimens turns fiery orange. After a gestation period of 4 months, an egg is produced. Gaund eggs have leathery shells and are covered in a clear, spicy-odored, jelly-like slime that is a fire retardant. The slime is contained in an organ located in the underbelly, and will not corrode or otherwise damage other materials which may be used to contain it. It and all acids

will neutralize each other, and it will spoil potions and perfumes it is mixed with. It is poisonous (Type A) if ingested, but harmless upon skin contact. Smearred on a cloak or other flammable item, it will give upon first exposure only a +4 bonus to saving throws vs. fire, +3 vs. magical fire and fireball. Gaund eggs are guarded ferociously, and will hatch in 3-12 days. Immature Gaund are small in size, having 2+4 hit dice, and lack the power to *Heat Metal* with their gaze. They mature in 3-6 months.

Gaund teeth are both hard and durable. They are often fashioned into daggers which dull easily but (unlike ivory) do not readily split or shatter. The tails of Gaund are highly valued for the rich, succulent meat found therein, which does not readily spoil.

Gaund hoard gems and pretty stones of all sorts, and have been known to trade these for food to parties too strong for them to overcome.





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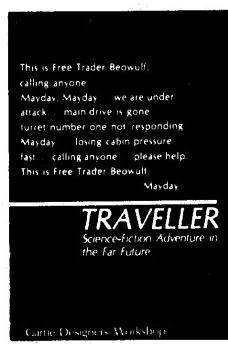
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THIS HERE'S TYRANNOSAURUS TEX

by Roger E. Moore

Some years ago a movie was made entitled *The Valley of Gwangi*, in which a group of cowboys stumble across a lost valley in the American Southwest populated by prehistoric dinosaurs and mammals. In the course of an impromptu rodeo, the cowboys encounter the uncrowned king of the valley: a great Tyrannosaurus Rex known as "Gwangi." The rest of the film is reminiscent of *King Kong*, with the capture of Gwangi, the attempt to exhibit him commercially, his escape and final destruction. Did the movie have to end this way? Maybe not.

The following scenario is freely adapted from the movie, and was designed to fit in with an ongoing *Boot Hill™* campaign if desired, or as a one-evening adventure unconnected with the regular goings-on. It should provide some lively entertainment for the players (and for the BH gamemaster as well; the look on the player's faces when he describes the figure towering over their characters will be something to treasure until the referee is old and grey.) Rather than creating a Lost Valley and the characteristics of the hordes of other beasts therein, an alternative method of getting "Gwangi" into play is given.

The Scenario

It is spring in El Dorado County. For two weeks thunderstorms have lashed at the countryside; flash floods and landslides are reported in the hills and mountains around Promise City. As the weather subsides ("the worst gully-washer in forty-odd years," say the old-timers) rumors of a great "devil-beast" are heard by traders doing business with some Indians in the mountains. The monster was supposedly released by the powers beyond during the height of the storm's fury, and now roams the hills at will. Some of the Indians believe that the beast, which they call The Avenger, was sent to destroy the white man and return the land to its original occupants. Other Indians, including most of the ones claiming to have seen the beast, regard the creature as evil and potentially hostile to all men.

These rumors are heard in the bars and taverns of Promise City, but are usually told with great derision and obvious amusement or contempt. Soldiers from Fort Griffin regard the rumors as a possible prelude to a general Indian uprising, believing the story to be the vision of a medicine man.

As time progresses, ranchers near the mountains discover the tracks of some unknown creature, unlike any tracks ever seen before. Many people regard them as a hoax, though the ranchers finding the tracks swear they aren't. Some reports of missing cattle are made known in the same area. Finally, a lone rider enters town, obviously panicked and having ridden hard for most of the day, and tells a tale of having met a huge reptilian beast in the mountains that attacked his party. He doesn't know what has happened to his friends, who rode off into a canyon to escape the creature.

When a posse is organized and goes into the area, the men discover the bodies of two of the missing men, partially devoured, and their mounts. Giant, three-toed tracks cover the area and lead away from the site, but the trail is lost as it enters rockier ground. The bodies of the men and animals show the marks of teeth larger than anything known, and the members of the posse believe it is impossible for this to have been the work of Indians or any other humans. The town marshal posts a reward of \$50,000 for the killing or capture of the monstrous predator.

Referee's Information

The thunderstorms caused a landslide, opening a natural cavern in the mountains. Through an unusual combination of geological circumstances, a Tyrannosaurus was trapped in that cavern millions of years ago and preserved alive but in hibernation; the rain waters washed away the surrounding rock cover and awakened the slumbering giant. It is now roaming about the country in search of food, and relishes the new diet of horses, cows, and humans it finds in the rough terrain. It has no established lair, but wanders freely in a fifty-mile radius around the place it emerged from. It fears nothing. Unless cut short by act of man or God, it has a life expectancy of another 50 years.

Some basic information on the Tyrannosaurus Rex will be helpful in running the adventure. The creature, by the best paleontological figuring available today, weighed eight tons in life, stood twenty feet high and had an overall length of forty to fifty feet. It moved with a waddling gait, using its tail to counterbalance its head and chest as it moved. It was fairly fast-moving, despite the apparent clumsiness of its motion.

While Tyrannosaurs existed, some six-

ty million years ago and more, they were at the top of the ecological food chain and preyed on any and all creatures across the American West and Asia. Their jaws were four feet long and jammed with four- to six-inch-long teeth. Tyrannosaurs had thick hides and were probably dark in color (black, grey, or reddish). Their forelimbs were useless as weapons and served only to help them get up from the ground after resting.

One of the books listed in this article's bibliography (*The Day of the Dinosaur*) discusses some of the finer aspects of dinosaur hunting, supposing that such was possible to the modern sportsman, and tells about shooting Tyrannosaurs in particular. It ain't easy, pard. First of all, it is difficult to say what the best place is to shoot at. A Tyrannosaurus has a very tiny brain (though with highly developed reflexes and senses), and head shots are not necessarily fatal. The heart is the best aiming point, but the de Camps note that the average Tyrannosaurus heart weighed somewhere between fifty and one hundred pounds and a direct hit with an elephant rifle would probably only slow the creature, rather than kill it immediately. Shots put elsewhere are a waste of time, and are dangerous for the hunter besides (who, in such cases, quickly becomes the hunted).

The *Boot Hill* characteristics of an adult Tyrannosaurus given below are arbitrary, of course, but are based on all available information. The statistics may be modified as desired, but in any event, it is recommended that it be very hard for a character to kill a dinosaur of any kind with only one shot. The stopping power of weapons in the 1800's was not as great as the weapons the de Camps spoke of in their discussion, and besides, a prolonged gunbattle will generate more excitement in the game.

An interesting side note: Paleontologists (fossil-hunters) and other scientists were unaware of the existence of Tyrannosaurs until the late 1800's and early 1900's, when several skeletons were discovered in Montana. Any scientists in the time of *Boot Hill*, might, however, be aware of the fossils of related species, such as Megalodon and Antrodemus (which were discovered earlier than Tyrannosaurus),

Tyrannosaurus Rex in Boot Hill:

Strength: 250

Speed: 27" tactical scale; 4 hexes/turn strategic scale. (Tactical scale turns are

10 seconds long; strategic turns are an hour long.)

Attacks: One every turn (10 seconds) for 2-11 wounds (1d10+1) per bite. Roll for the effects and location of each wound separately.

To hit: 85% base chance; modifiers for target condition (obscured, moving, etc.) apply, as well as modifiers for the wounded condition of the Tyrannosaurus.

Range of Attack: From where it stands, a Tyrannosaurus has a "reach" of three hexes, tactical scale (about 18'), when it leans down to bite at someone. The Tyrannosaurus will attack last in order in each turn that it attacks.

Morale: 100%. *Absolutely fearless.*

Additional notes: A Tyrannosaurus cannot be stunned unless dynamite is used (see Dynamite Rule below). All minor characters must make an immediate morale check at -60% upon first confronting this monster, fleeing immediately if they fail. Characters firing weapons or shooting bows at a Tyrannosaurus have a +15% to hit due to its large size.

Hit Location Chart for Tyrannosaurus

Dice	Location	Light Wound	Serious Wound	Mortal Wound
01-20	Tail	01-80	81-00	---
21-50	Rear Leg**	01-60	61-00	---
51-55	Forearm**	01-70	71-00	---
56-75	Abdomen	01-50	51-99	00
76-85	Chest	01-40	41-95	96-00

86-00 Head & Neck 01-40 41-98 99-00
** 01-50 = Left, 51-00 = Right.

A result of Light Wound means a deduction of 3 points from the Tyrannosaurus's strength; a result of Serious Wound deducts 7 points. If a Mortal Wound is received, the Tyrannosaurus will continue to fight for 1-10 turns before collapsing and dying. During that time it will move at half normal speed and have a base chance of 45% to hit a target, making one attack every two turns until death.

If the Tyrannosaurus's strength is reduced to zero or less from non-mortal wounds, it becomes unconscious and has a 30% chance of dying 1-10 hours later. Thereafter, if it survives, it regains one strength point per day, to a maximum of its original strength. If captured alive, it must be fed its own weight (8 tons) in raw meat every month to keep it healthy. It will also be active and extremely dangerous, and any keepers will have their hands full!

Using the above chart, there is a 1% chance of inflicting a mortal wound on the Tyrannosaurus with any single shot. Referees should adjust hit location to take into account attacks made from ground level, since these beasts had hips 10' off the ground and knees 6' high. An Indian warrior with a tomahawk would score a hit on a location between 01-50 on the above chart (a leg or tail)

unless the dinosaur bends down to bite him; if that happens, hits may be registered elsewhere on the body or head.

The Dynamite Rule

For every two sticks of dynamite used against a Tyrannosaurus in one attack, there is a cumulative 50% chance of stunning it for one turn (10 seconds), a 25% chance of inflicting a wound or wounds (d10: 1-2 = one wound, 3-5 = two wounds, 6-8 = three wounds, 9-0 = four wounds), and a cumulative 10% chance of killing it outright. This percentage is reduced by 20% (for stunning, wounding, and killing) for each 2" (12') that the monster is distant from the explosion. For example, 20 sticks of dynamite exploded 4" (24') from a Tyrannosaurus has a 460% chance of stunning it (500-40=460), a 210% chance of wounding it (250-40=210) and a 60% chance of killing it (100-40=60). Treat any amount of dynamite greater than 40 sticks as 40 sticks.

Good luck, and hoping you have a fast horse!

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How to ease the Boot Hill™ identity crisis

by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

Everyone seems to have a place in Boot Hill except the player-characters, who have to be content with a place on Boot Hill. They wander in and out of nowhere, invariably causing much havoc and then moving on.

Mind you, it doesn't have to be that way. A player can simply define his character as being the local deputy, or whatever; however, it seems that most players are reluctant to do that.

Nor is this attitude necessarily born of timidity. The Deputy, for example, would clearly have certain advantages over the other characters, and the players may be reluctant to claim a clear advantage for themselves.

The impartial (and usual) way to determine matters such as this is to roll on a table (May I have the envelope, please?):

Roll Character Background

MALE CHARACTERS

01-06	Gunman
07-11	Gambler
12-16	Rancher
17-19	Bartender
20-23	Lawyer
24-27	Bounty Hunter
28-30	Deputy Marshal
31-33	Detective

34	Miner
35-38	Wells Fargo Agent
39-44	Cowboy
45-47	Stage Driver
48-49	Homesteader
50	Merchant
51-52	Gunsmith
53-54	Blacksmith
55-59	Drifter
60	Secret Service Agent
61	Clerk
62	Sheep Rancher
63-65	Foreigner
66-67	Teacher
68-69	Preacher
70	Scout
71-74	Cavalryman
75-77	Cavalry Officer
78	Banker
79-80	Craftsman
81-83	Doctor
84-85	Dentist
86	Photographer
87	Author
88	Artist
89-91	Deputy Sheriff
92-95	Reporter
96-00	Indian

FEMALE CHARACTERS

01-05	Gambler
06-08	Rancher

09-13	Bartender
14	Lawyer
15-16	Detective
17	Secret Service Agent
18-23	Clerk
24-30	Foreigner
31-38	Teacher
39-43	Doctor
44-47	Dentist
48-52	Photographer
53-58	Artist
59-62	Author
63-64	Reporter
65-72	Secretary
73-81	Saloon Girl
82-88	Indian
89-90	Nun
91-00	Widow

Before anyone asks, I'm not notably chauvinistic—but the times were.

It should be noted that if you were to use these tables to populate a town, it would be a very strange town indeed. The idea is not to reflect the population, but to recreate the mix of character types you find in westerns—especially the older westerns and new old-style westerns (respectively typified by *Rio Bravo* and *Breakheart Pass*), where there was more variety of characters; newer westerns tend to divide the population into three classes: cuties, killers and bodies.

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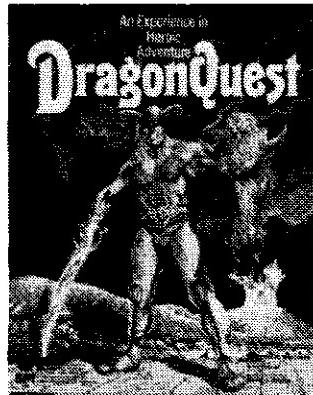
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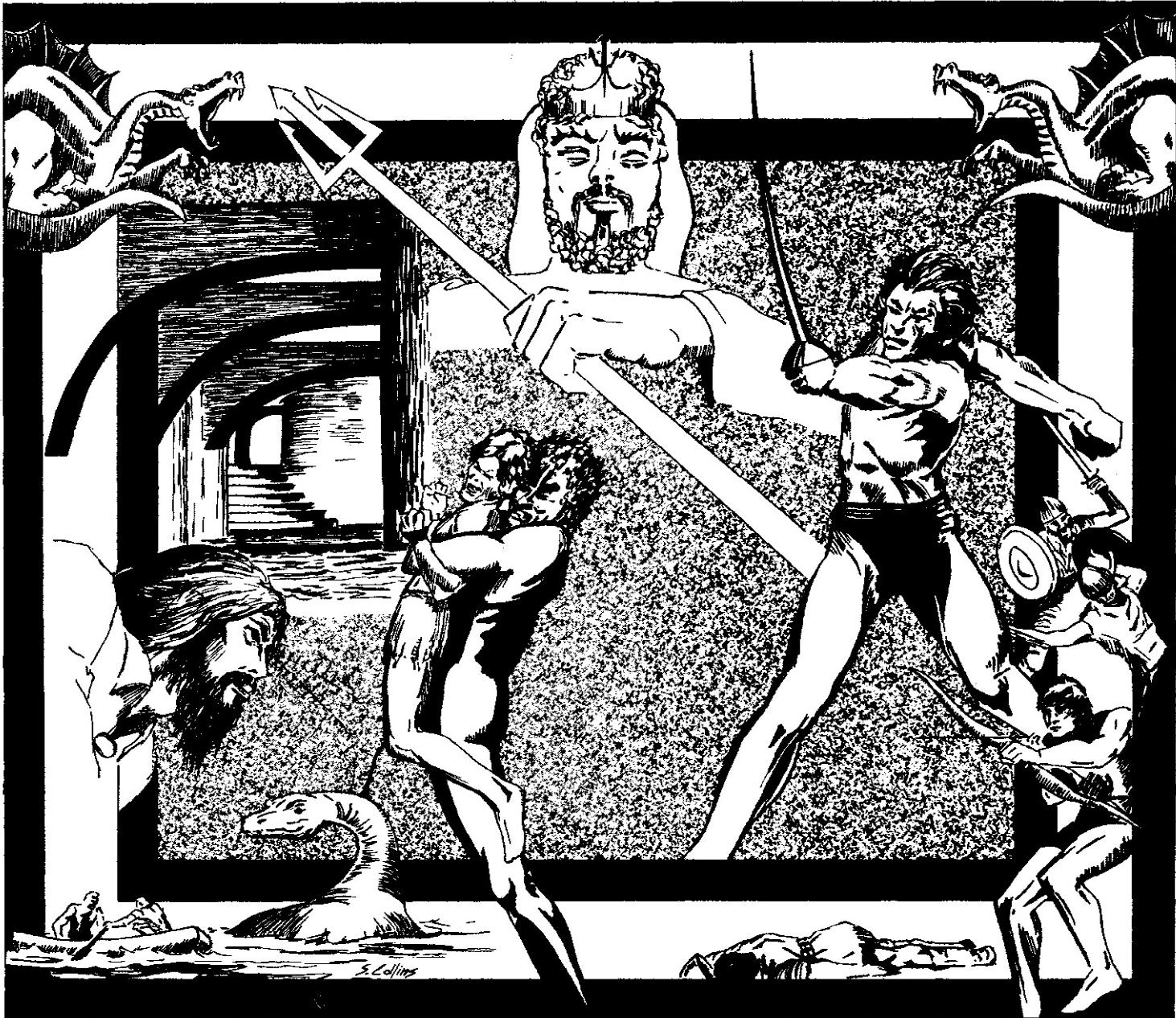
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THE TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

by Paul Reiche III

I wrote The Temple of Poseidon early in the spring of 1980 as part of an application for employment at TSR Hobbies, Inc. Having grown tired of fourteen straight years of school, I decided to take some time off from college and work full-time for a change. The problem was where to find a job. I had already had several, all of which were boring or (as was with the case with piano moving) physically undesirable.

A year earlier, TSR had hired my good friend Erol Otus as a staff artist. After visiting Erol out in the chilly wastes of Wisconsin, and learning that—contrary to what I had heard—the men and women of TSR were not evil, hateful creatures, I decided that perhaps a job with TSR was the kind of change I was looking for. So with several years of playing experience and authorship of two fantasy role-playing supplements under my belt (*Booty and The Beasts* and *The*

Necromican co-authored with Mathias Genser and Erol Otus) I started work on the Temple of Poseidon.

In designing the module, I drew upon two of my favorite fantasy authors, H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, for a mood. I attempted to balance the hack-and-slash elements of the work with sections that required mental effort. In order to make the module as fresh and unique as possible, I purposely chose some rarely used *Monster Manual* beasts (in addition to the monsters I created). Although I have learned a lot since I wrote the module, I am still quite pleased with it.

Well, I did end up getting a position with TSR and have been working away quite happily for more than half a year now in the development and design departments. When I learned of an opportunity to have The Temple of Poseidon considered for publication in *Dragon* magazine, I eagerly investigated the possibility—and the end result can be found on the pages which follow this one. I sincerely hope that both the Temple's players and DM's enjoy exploring its heinous depths as much as I enjoyed designing them.

THE TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

BACKGROUND

For the past several days, dozens of strong earthquakes have rocked the coastal area surrounding the underground Temple of Poseidon. Since the first quake, there have been a growing number of reports of strange events and macabre occurrences throughout the area. Several families near the temple have abandoned their farms and refused to return. They claim to have been terrorized by inhuman specters who prowled about their farms late at night. One of the farmers says he found a farm animal crucified and eviscerated in a ritualistic fashion on his front porch.

Following the first tremors, all communications with the Temple of Poseidon, seemingly the center of the troubled area, were cut off. Messengers dispatched to the temple to request guidance from the Holy Oracle located there have not returned. Now the darkness has spread to this town. Unnatural births have occurred. Strange cries can be heard in the night, and there is a cowl around the moon. Magical divining has proven useless in naming the dark forces that invade.

Many of the townspeople have already abandoned their homes and those who remain have but one recourse left: They have sent out a cry for hardened adventurers, experienced in dispatching evil. They must travel to the temple to discover the fate of the men there, and, if possible, elicit their help in destroying the growing heinous power.

SUGGESTED PARTY COMPOSITION

This is a dangerous quest! A strong party and experienced players are required to succeed in the mission with minimal casualties. Seven to ten characters of mixed class are recommended with a combined total of at least 70 levels. The adventurers should also be well equipped with magic spells and weaponry.

START

The party leaves the town just before dawn and arrives at the coast unmolested, late in the day. They must make the final leg of their journey by boat. The craft supplied for the mission are 8 feet long and about 3 feet wide. The boats fit 4 characters each, and can be paddled at the rate of 8" per turn.

The adventurers make their way up the coast and reach the temple's entrance. Two dark openings lead into the cliff, the one on the west slightly larger than the east. About 30 feet up and further to the west there is a slight depression in the rock face, but little else can be seen of it.

The adventure begins here with the party entering one of the two dim cavern entrances.

NOTES FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

The party must choose which of the two openings it will enter. In either case, they must light torches or lanterns, for, unless otherwise noted, the entire cavern and temple areas are dark. The sides of the cave are covered with barnacles, anemones and various small crustaceans. Unless otherwise stated, the depth of the water is from 11 to 20 feet. The water is murky, nearly opaque. The ceilings vary in height from 6 to 25 feet (always 25 feet above beaches or bridges), and are covered with moss and small sharp stalactites. The walls are wet and smooth, making climbing impossible. All of the bridges are high enough to allow passage beneath them.

At one time, magical fields protected this cavernous area from transgression by dangerous sea beasts. However, the protective fields are now, for the most part, gone. The only portions of the enchanted wards that still function restrict all flight and levitation in the cavern, and will negate light produced by a magic spell or item.

The temple complex itself (areas 8-19) is made of stone, and

should be treated as an ordinary dungeon for most purposes. The wards preventing flight and illumination do not operate here. Due to the extremely moist air, fireballs and similar flaming weapons do only 2/3 normal damage. There is a 10% chance per turn of encountering wandering monsters while in the cavern or temple structure.

The walls of the aliens' subterranean complex (everything beyond room 19) are made of an unknown substance that has the qualities of plastic and steel. Due to this material, both teleportation and dimension doors are impossible. The material is nearly indestructible, and will reflect all light or energy directed at it. There is no chance of encountering wandering monsters while in this area.

SWIMMING

In some cases characters might for some reason jump or otherwise move into the water. It is to be assumed that every member of the party knows how to swim. However, this does not grant any adventurer the ability to do the breast stroke in full plate mail. An unencumbered human swims at 6" per turn. If he is wearing clothes, boots, and the other assorted oddities most characters carry, then he will swim at 4" per turn. If he enters water wearing leather armor, he must roll 1/2 his strength or less on d20 to move at 2" per turn; otherwise, he will sink. If someone wearing plate or full chain mail attempts to swim, he will drop like a rock and drown in 2-8 melee rounds. Chain mail requires 1 melee round to remove, leather 2, and plate 4.

There is a chance that drowned characters can be revived after the body is recovered. The process requires 1 full turn. The drowned individual's chance of survival is designated by his Constitution x 3 expressed as a percent. If the roll is made, the person will revive but have -4 to his Constitution, Strength and Dexterity for 1 day. If the roll is failed, the drowned character will die.

WANDERING MONSTER ENCOUNTER CHART

If the dice indicate that the party is to meet a group of wandering monsters, they will meet one of the following (roll 1d6). Every time they meet one of the groups, cross it off the list and next time choose only from those groups not yet encountered.

1. 2-8 (4 hit dice each) Vampiric Ixitachitl
2. 1-4 Giant Lizards
3. 1-10 Troglodytes
4. 1-3 Umber Hulks
5. 1-12 Lizard Men
6. 1-4 Giant Killer Frogs plus 1-4 Poisonous Frogs

AREA AND ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

Area 1. [You find your way blocked by a sandbar which fans out into a small beach. The shortest path across the sand is only about 15 feet long and lies next to the west wall. Due to the shallow draft of your small vessels, it should be easy to pull your boats across the obstruction and continue on.]

The benign appearance of the sand is a carefully wrought deception. Just a few feet beneath the surface of the beach lies the dread *Subsilicate Cephalopod*, also known as the Sand Squid, which will erupt from beneath the sand and attack the characters as they pull their first boat across. Due to the beast's adaption to the dry, gritty environment, it has grown a thick hide, giving it an armor class of 4. The creature has 8 hit dice (56 hit points), and movement 6". It attacks with its six 20-foot-long tentacles, each of which constricts for 2-12 points damage. Each separate tentacle can take 5 points of damage before it is rendered useless. When something comes within 5 feet of the main body, the Sand Squid may attack with its pointed beak. If this blow is successful, the attack will inflict 3-24 points damage and coat the target in a viscous acid slime which will



burn for 3 melee rounds, doing 2-16 points damage each round. *Neutralize Poison* will render the goo inert. If 4 tentacles have been incapacitated, the monster will retreat 15 feet beneath the sand and wait for less dangerous prey to wander past.

Area 2. [In the middle of the cavern is a low, sandy island with a stone path traversing it. Two bridges arch off either end of the isle and lead into dark openings in the cavern walls. A marble bench is located slightly off the path in the center of the island.]

This area is a resting stop along the temple's Path of Meditation. If anyone ventures onto the island, he will be attacked by a group of 3 Sea Lions. Each of this pride can reach up to 15 feet inland and attack with its 2 claws and mighty bite for 1-6, 1-6 and 2-12 points damage, respectively. The beasts have 6 hit dice (43, 37, 35 hit points), armor class 4, and movement 18". They will attack until slain.

Area 3. [You enter a large grotto about 100 feet in diameter. The area is dimly lit by 2 urns filled with burning oil, set into the walls on either side of the cavern. To the southwest there is a dock with steps leading up to a raised platform.]

Little do the adventurers realize that the pool beneath them is 100 feet deep and contains the temple's guardian, a mammoth Plesiosaurus. The 60-foot-long dinosaur resembles a huge snake with a bloated midsection and small fin-like flippers. The guardian wears an enchanted metal chain about its neck which gives the beast powers of telepathy, diminution and limited intelligence. Once the boats have reached the center of the grotto, the Plesiosaurus will rise up and block their way to the dock. For the next 3 melee rounds, the creature will probe the minds of the party. If the beast is not attacked, at the end of the 3 melee rounds it will smile a toothy grin and sink, letting the party pass by, having realized the purpose of their visit.

However, if attacked, the Plesiosaurus will retaliate. The dinosaur has 20 hit dice (hit points 139), armor class 7, and movement 15". It will slash with its two front flippers for 2-12 points damage each, and bite for an additional 5-20. The guardian can crush a boat in 1 melee round by wrapping its tail around the vessel and constricting, sending all passengers into the icy waters. The magical chain the dinosaur wears will function only for the Plesiosaurus.

Area 4. [Your passage is brought to a halt by a large, sandy area that completely blocks your path. The beach extends at least 30 feet inland; from somewhere in the darkness ahead on the beach you hear a wet, slapping sound.]

Just beyond the party's vision stands a complement of the Locathah Warrior Elite, outfitted for surface travel in rubbery, moisture suits, and wearing spherical, water-filled, transparent helmets. If any of the party rolls an 11 or 12 on a 12-sided die, he will see movement ahead and a glimpse of light that is reflected off the Locathah's bubble helmets. The fishmen recently learned of the temple's new vulnerability. They are investigating the caverns for future assault. Among the group of 10 are 7 warriors, 2 leader-class fighters and 1 great chief. Each warrior has 16 hit points, armor class 6, and movement 4". They wield bladed lances that strike for 1-10 points damage. The leader-class fighters have 18 hit points, armor class 6, movement 4". They use large, barbed tridents that strike for 2-16 points damage each. The chief has 30 hit points, armor class 4, movement 6". He carries a +2 two-handed sword that strikes for 6-24 (2d10 + 4) points damage, and can sweep in a circle, striking up to 3 targets in a round if they are no more than 10 feet away. The bubble masks are armor class 0 and take 5 points of damage before they are shattered. Any Locathah without a mask must roll 5 or 6 on a 6-sided die to continue fighting. Otherwise it will run for the nearest water to avoid painful asphyxiation.

Due to the strange anatomy of the Locathah hand, all their weapon grips are cumbersome to the human grasp. Any person using one of these items will attack at -2 and do half damage. The leader wears a ceremonial necklace, containing 5 opal gems, each of which are worth 1,000 gold pieces.

Area 5. [The cavern ahead narrows to a passage 5 feet wide. You travel at half speed. The walls of the cavern are coated with small, furry spiders, about 2 inches in diameter.]

The spiders are completely innocuous and can be killed with a torch's flame. The true dangers hide within shadowed recesses in the cavern wall. They are 3 Subterranean Lizards. Each lizard has 6 hit dice, (hit points 40, 36 and 12). When the boats pass by their dark abodes, the reptilian beasts will lunge out and snap at their opponents for 2-12 points damage. The lizards expose only a small

portion of their 20-foot-long bodies, and so have a modified armor class of 2.

Area 6. [Your journey is again impeded; a broad expanse of sand blocks your way. The light of your torches partially illuminates the area in front of you, and a bizarre, lumpy terrain can be seen. You detect something moving, just beyond the light of your torches.]

As the boats approach the beach, 3 fearsome beasts with the looks of Eye Tyrants rush out of the shadows. They are, in fact, Gas Spores! The darkness assists their naturally deceptive appearance, and there is only a 25% chance that the party will recognize the fungoids as anything but Beholders. The plant-like monsters attack by touching their opponents, needing a 10 or better to do so. If one succeeds, it will inject thousands of spores, which will begin to grow inside the victim. Unless a *Cure Disease* spell is cast upon the afflicted person, he will fall into unconsciousness in 15 turns, and burst open, releasing 2-8 new gas spores, 24 hours later. If any one of the gas spores is struck, it will violently explode, inflicting 6-36 points damage (save = half damage) to all within 20 feet. If either of the other two gas spores are within the explosion radius, there is a 33% chance that they will explode as well.

If the party ventures up the beach, they will find a colony of 6 gargantuan fungus growths, called Screamers. The sessile creatures are a mutated form of Shrieker, and stand over 8 feet tall. Each has the appearance of an enlarged common mushroom, differing only in its reddish-purple hue. Every fungus has 5 hit dice (31-40 hit points), armor class 6. Light or movement within 10 feet will cause the Screamers to use their single form of attack, their piercing scream. Everyone within 25 feet will take 3-18 points of sonic damage and will be stunned by the shriek for 1-10 melee rounds. If those in the area make their saving throws, they take half the damage and suffer no stun effect.

Area 7. [The tunnel dead ends and there is no way out but the way you came in. Your boats seem to be scraping on something just beneath the surface of the murky water.]

The rasping sound is produced by the bottoms of the boats scraping the tops of Giant Sea Spiders' lairs. Within the fibrous abode dwell dozens of these huge arachnids, each over 6 feet in diameter. The creatures will climb up into the boats at the rate of 1 per melee round; roll randomly to ascertain which craft is attacked. Each spider has 7 hit dice (44 plus 1-12 hit points), armor class 5, movement 15", and can bite for 1-6 points damage. In addition, the spiders inject a venom which will paralyze their victims unless a save versus poison is made. Even if the saving throw is successful, the effects of the poison will still retard the victim's movement, causing him to fight and defend at -3 for 1-10 turns.

Area 8. [The platform is made of marble and is obviously the dock and main entrance to the temple. Tall, stone pillars frame the open doorway. The wide double doors have been broken outward and hang at a skewed angle the wall. Slimy tracks leading into the temple show signs that sea beasts have entered the complex, and that the area is indeed unguarded. Burned remnants of torches hang on the walls. No sounds emerge from the black opening. There is only darkness.]

Room 9. [These four rooms are furnished as temporary housing for those nobles and wealthy merchants who often visited the oracle within the temple for guidance. Each room has a thick, oak door, holds a desk, two chairs, a large wardrobe and a bed of water contained in a magical field of retention. Each room is detailed below:

- A. Empty, aside from that mentioned above. However, a crack runs across the center of the room's floor and one side of the floor is 1 foot lower than the other.
- B. A horrid stench comes from this room. Inside one will find a man and a woman, both clothed in lavish robes, lying dead in

long-dried pools of blood. In one hand the man holds a dagger, stained red. A carefully scribed note, written in the common tongue, rests on the desk and reads as follows:

"We have at last retreated to our own room. The priest, our only hope, is dead. I think my wife and I are the last ones left. The great upheaval sank all of the boats and broke the wards. Our only escape route is cut off. We are doomed. There is but one choice we have left: Either we take our own lives, or we let ourselves be slain by those hideous things out there, who will steal our souls as well. We have no alternative. Farewell."

- C. Obviously a well-to-do tradesman lived here, for the room is hung with rich tapestries and the wardrobe is filled with fine clothing. If the pockets of the clothes are searched, the party will find 20 platinum pieces and a finely cut sapphire gem worth 1,500 gold pieces.
- D. The door to this chamber is slightly ajar and quite warm to the touch. If anyone attempts to listen at the portal, there is a 50% chance they will hear high-pitched keening, interspersed with a low, rumbling sound, probably a voice. When the door is opened, the adventurers will find a truly strange spectacle before them: In one corner of the room, huddled in a fetal position, is a haggard, wild-eyed human. From his loud rant-



ings, it will be clear that the man is insane. Looming over him is a 12-foot-tall, reddish-skinned humanoid, pleading with the madman. After a few seconds, the large creature, an Efreeti, will turn around and beg the party to help his sick master by removing the horrid cursed amulet from about his master's neck. If any of the party complies with this request, the Efreeti will immediately attack that person, shouting, "And so I fulfill my final command; to attack those who assault my master or attempt to take his possession." The enchanted creature, actually a Pasha noble, has 11 hit dice (88 hit points), armor class 1, and movement 9" walking, 24 flying. Aside from his numerous Efreet powers, he may strike with each great claw for 3-24 points damage each. Due to his elevated position in the Efreet hierarchy, the Pasha has been granted the ability to breathe magical fire once per day in a cone 25 feet long and 15 feet wide. All caught within the burning area will suffer 4-32 points damage, unless they make their saving throws, in which case the damage will be halved.

Once the person holding the mystic amulet has been slain or subdued, the Efreeti will snatch the item and shift to the astral plane to make good his escape. If the party refuses to remove the amulet, the devious creature will use his cunning to make the characters either, take something from the insane man, or attack him, as either act would fulfill his last command of releasing the Efreeti from bondage. He will insult, degrade, and verbally abuse the adventurers. The reason for the Pasha's strange behavior is due to the nature of the necklace the insane man wears. Once per week, for a maximum duration of 3 hours per use, this item may summon the Efreeti from his home in the City of Brass to perform 1 command for the holder. The single limitation to this device is its inability to force the Efreeti to grant wishes. If the beast is slain, 1 month will pass before he reincarnates and is able to be summoned once more.

Room 10. [The large room you have just entered is evidently some sort of refectory or commons. There is a crack across the room, leaving one side of the room 6 inches higher than the other. In the middle of the chamber there is a 30-foot-long, stone table, surrounded by 21 chairs. On the north wall there is a large hearth with wood piled beside it. Against the west wall there are various utensils for use in food preparation. In the northwest corner there is a covered pit used, no doubt, for refuse disposal. The walls are covered with bas reliefs of tremendous sea beasts, such as the Great White Shark, Leviathan, and Devil Kraken. One design, however, seems to be slightly obscured, as though the wall were fused smooth.]

This "fused" wall is actually covered by a large (25 hit point) Ochre Jelly, turned gray through adaptation to the environment. This slimy beast will remain stuck to the stone until something comes within 5 feet. The jelly will then drop off the wall onto an area 10 feet wide by 15 feet long, burning those in the area for 3-12 points of caustic damage. The amoeba has armor class 8, movement 3". It attacks by sending out up to 3 pseudopods per melee round, each of which strike for 1-8 points damage. Unlike the non-mutated ochre jelly, this beast is immune to fire and cold-based attacks.

In addition, deep within the pit there are 3 salt-water equivalents of the Carrion Crawler. Like their land-going brethren, each has 3 plus 1 hit dice (23, 20 and 17 hit points), movement 12" and armor class 3/7. The creatures attack with 4 five-foot-long, tongue-like tentacles, which each hit for 1 point of damage, and secrete an enzyme that paralyzes their opponents unless their victims make a saving throw versus poison'. Since the Carrion Crawlers are so deep in the pit, it will be 10 melee rounds before they arrive at the surface and can attack the party. They will not follow the adventurers out of the room.

THE PATH OF MEDITATION

This smooth stone path was used by the temple's residents for solitude and contemplation. The walls of the trail are covered with

frescoes. Every few yards the wall paintings display a different scene from some myth concerning Poseidon.

Area 11. [This is a sunlit room, containing neat rows of flowers. The light is supplied by a clever arrangement of prisms and mirrors that bring the sun's rays from the surface. Two marble benches, located in dark, shadowed recesses, face the flower beds. They are surrounded by the shards of a shattered crystal bowl. There are 4 different sections of flowers; a single set is located several feet from the other three.]

The northernmost bench is actually a Killer Mimic, which will attack anyone coming within 5 feet. The creature extrudes a member from its body and punches its opponent for 4-12 points damage. The Mimic has 9 hit dice (50 hit points), armor class 7, movement 3". All weapons striking the Mimic will adhere to the monster's skin due to a powerful glue. The weapons may be wrenched free in 2-8 melee rounds by a character who rolls his strength or less on d20. The mimic will not move out of the shadowed alcove due to its strong aversion to sunlight.

The isolated section of flowers consists of a variant of the carnivorous Venus flytrap. The plants look like a normal blood-red flower, with a thick stalk. These Cannibal Carnations each have 2 hit points, armor class 8, and movement 0. If something ventures within the range of the ravenous little devils (usually about 3 feet), the plants will bend toward their target and expose their hidden jaws. At any time when a target is in range, from 1-10 of the beasts will be in a position to attack that target, inflicting 1 point of damage each. Every Cannibal Carnation contains 1 seed which, if planted, will sprout and grow into an adult within 1 week.

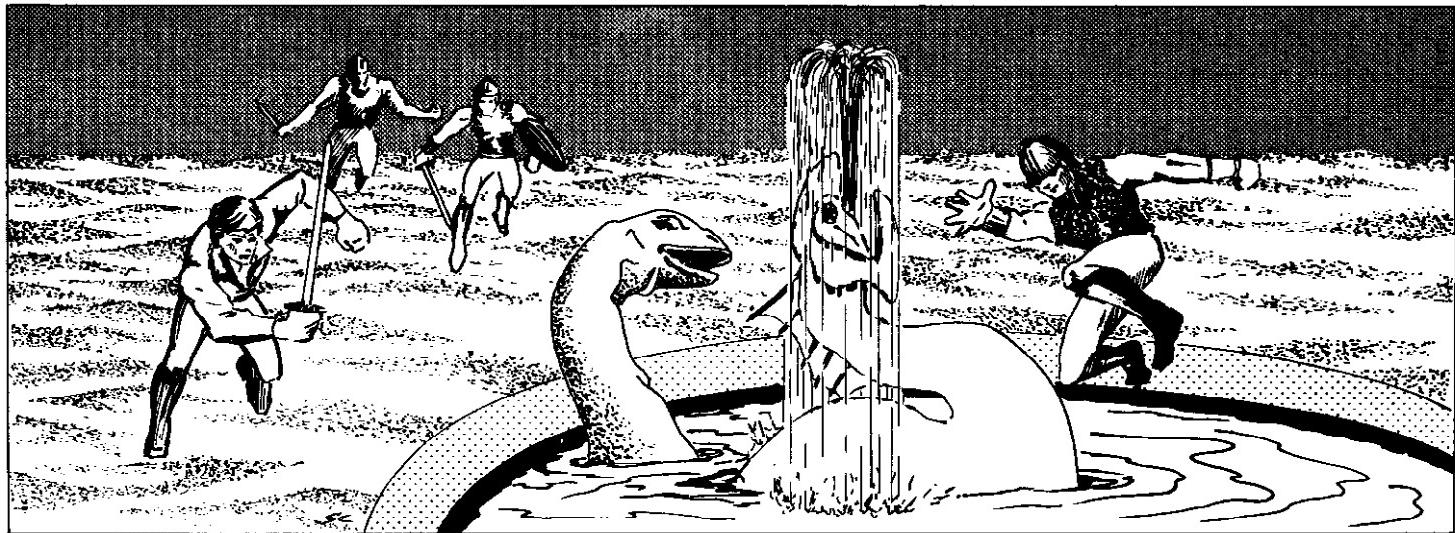
Area 12. [You travel up 25 feet of steps and reach an opening in the wall, into which sunlight pours. This opening leads to a semi-circular, amphitheater-like balcony that looks down on the crashing surf. The floor is made of marble, and pillars reach 35 feet up to the rock ceiling. In one end of the balcony lies a huge pile of sticks, grass and small rocks. Mewing sounds come from behind it.]

The adventurers have chanced upon a Dragonne nest. Behind the pile of sticks and grass lie a female adult and a young male cub. The adult male will return from outside in 1-4 melee rounds, and attack the party if they are still there. The female will attack if anyone approaches within 10 feet. She has 7 hit dice (47 hit points), armor class 3, movement 15"/9". The creature attacks with 2 claws and a bite, doing 1-6, 1-6 and 2-12 points of damage respectively. The cub has only 1 hit die and cannot attack, but could be trained as a pet or guardian once full-grown. The male has 9 hit dice (68 hit points), armor class 2, movement the same as the female; he uses his claws for 1-8 each, bites for 3-18, and can produce a tremendous roar as well. The deep bellow will cause weakness to all within 100 feet and will deafen all those within 30 feet. The weakness results in half strength for 2-12 melee rounds. The deafness will last a similar length of time and, in addition to ruining the victim's hearing, will cause him to fight and defend at -2 due to disorientation.

Among the detritus making up the Dragonne nest, the adventurers may find a brass ring which allows the wearer to regenerate as per a Troll. The chance of finding the ring is 10% times the number of party members who search—but even if a dice roll indicates success, the search must be continued for 3-6 turns to be fruitful.

Area 13. [As you walk along the footpath, you come to a wide crack in the wall. Strange, cheesy odors come from the fissure. There is a slight luminescence produced by odd fungus, half revealing a 4-foot-wide tunnel going back into the rock. If you continue, you will find your eyes adjust rapidly to the pale green light, and torches are no longer needed. The tunnel leads to an irregular cavern, about 30 feet wide, which is covered with lichens, molds and various types of mushrooms.]

The party is attacked by a colony of 7 Myconymphs, a race of



intelligent fungi. The creatures stand 7 feet tall, and are spindly in build, having thin arms and legs. They have vaguely humanoid features but from various parts of their bodies hang oddly-shaped bunches of mold. Each has 4 + 1 hit dice (25 plus 1-8 hit points each), armor class 7, and movement 9". They attack by flailing their opponents with their thin arms for 1-4 points damage each. The Myconymphs also bite for 1-3 points damage, and a successful bite will inject a soporific venom that will cause total immobility for 1-6 full turns. A saving throw results in a slowing effect, which will halve Dexterity and movement for 1-10 melee rounds. The flesh of the fungus-men is deadly poison to all humanoids.

Area 14. [Crossing the bridge, you enter a square cave, lit by a nearly exhausted oil lantern. In one corner sits a large fountain and basin. Water pours from the mouth of a fearsome sea-serpent statue whose eyes are made of emeralds, each worth 6,000 gold pieces. The floor is made of uneven mounds of sand.]

If someone attempts to pluck the valuable eyes from the fountain statue, a Water Weird will spring forth from the basin and attack the offender. The Weird has 25 hit points, armor class 4, movement 12" up to 10 feet away from the pool. It can strike one enemy up to 10 feet away each melee round, hitting on an 11 or better. The victim must save versus paralyzation or be drawn into the water. While the Weird lives, the character cannot be removed. If 4 melee rounds pass without other party members having destroyed the Water Weird, the victim will have drowned. Sharp weapons do only 1 point of damage to the creature, but blunt ones do full damage. Cold spells slow it, fire does half damage, and a *Purify water* spell will kill the creature. If slain, the Weird will re-form in 2 melee rounds.

Room 15. [The area is filled with rows of beds, 40 in all, and in the western third of the room there are tall stacks of books. Next to each bed there is a small table on which rest writing tools and a small, glass bowl. On the south wall there is a large, crystalline jar set in a niche in the wall. This vessel is filled with sparkling water.]

This room served as both acolyte quarters and library. The piles of books all concern the nature of ocean and sea mythologies found throughout the world. The crystal water vessel has been enchanted to remain forever full of pure water to be used by the apprentices in their meditation rituals. The common procedure to attain enlightenment involved an acolyte filling his personal bowl with water from the sacred jar, and then slowly walking along the Path of Meditation, concentrating deeply upon the sparkling motes of light within the liquid. The magic vessel weighs 15 pounds when empty (but it is never empty for long!) and will produce up to 3 gallons of water per melee round.

Room 16. [you pass through a massive iron-bound door into a

dimly lit room. On the north side of the chamber there is a large, wooden table, a bed and other assorted accoutrements. A shallow dish made of gold rests on a marble stand beside the bed. It is filled with water. The room evidently belonged to the arch-priest of this temple. On the priest's desk rest a variety of books concerning ancient sea lore. In addition, there is an open journal. The first section is dated 16 days past, and the last entry is only a few days old. It reads as follows, beginning with the earliest notation:

"Today was truly exciting. We were hit by a rather large earthquake, the first in decades. The temple suffered a few cracks in the floors and walls, but no one was hurt and repairs are underway. One thing does trouble me, though. The wards barring dangerous creatures from our caverns seem to have been weakened by the shock; nothing drastic, but I am concerned."

The next entry was written a week later:

"More quakes, not as great as the first but damaging nonetheless. The floor of the commons sinks with each successive tremor. Another problem: The protective wards are definitely weakening. Two acolytes walking along the Path of Meditation were attacked yesterday. One was badly hurt before we could drive the beasts off. We can only pray to the Sea Lord that things don't get worse before help arrives, since all our boats were destroyed by falling rocks during the last tremor. The morale of the acolytes is failing. They are afraid and even miss services occasionally. One claimed to see an inhuman apparition late last night."

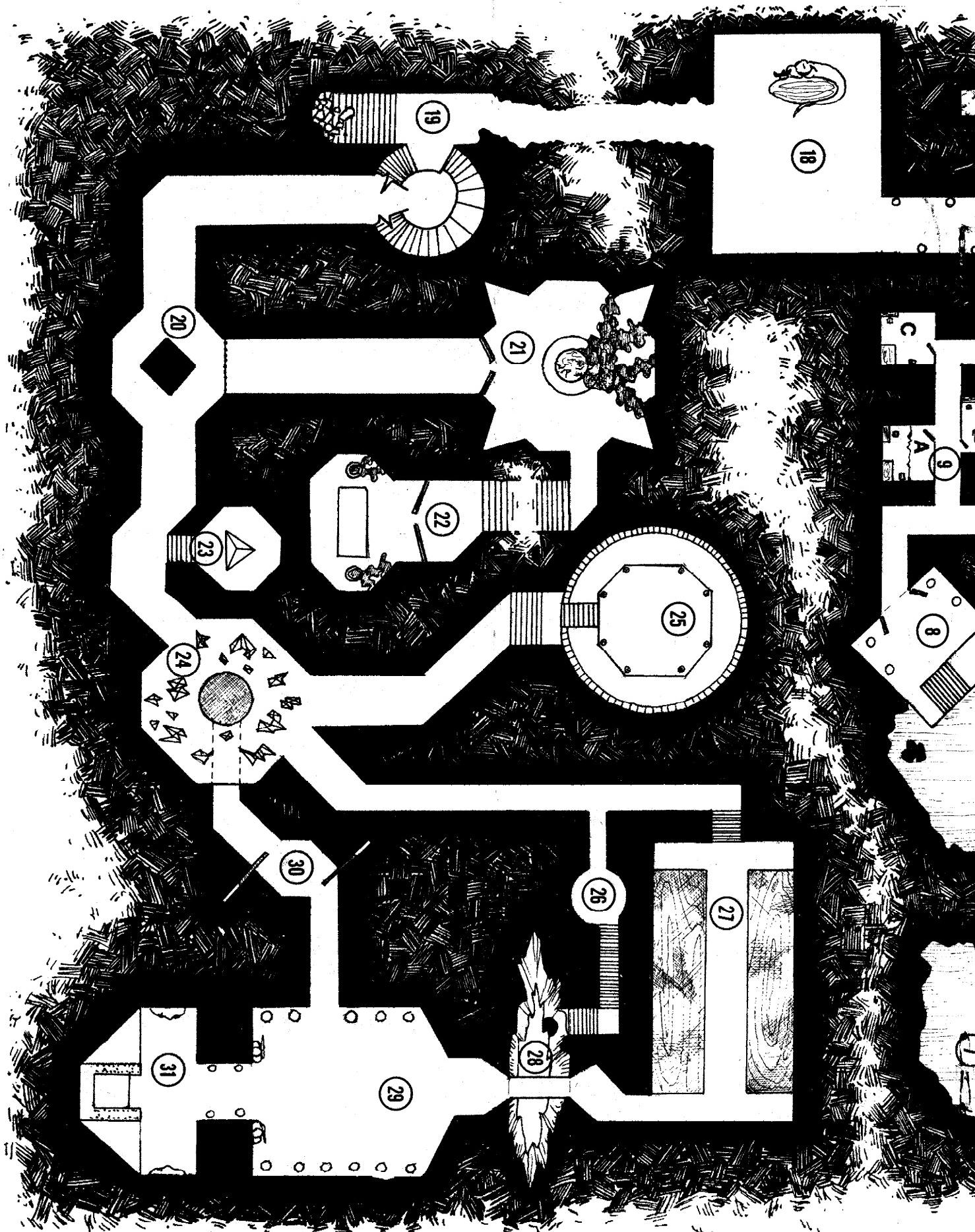
Four days later:

"Something unspeakably bad is happening here. The monstrous specters are a reality. I saw one myself last night. An evil influence is growing here. Just hours ago one of my pupils went insane and attacked a group of his friends with a knife. He killed one and wounded two others before he was subdued. The visitors here have retreated to their rooms in fear, and come out only for meals. The wards have failed completely now, and we are subject to continuous attack. Worst of all, the oracle is deaf to our pleas. It has not spoken a word since three days past. Poseidon save us!"

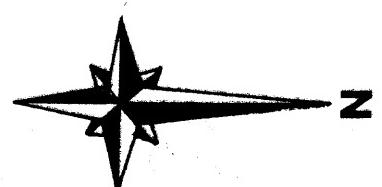
The last entry is two days old:

"We have been attacked by an evil beyond description. It is the Elder gods, the dark ones who eat time! Only in the last few hours have I realized what is truly happening to us. Years ago this area was found to have incredibly high mana, the power on which all magic feeds. To take advantage of this natural wonder, my ancestors built this temple on top of the mana source. How were they to know that they were not the first? How were they to know that beneath our stone corridors there resides another complex, built by darkly evil inhumans in millenia past. The earthquakes must have awakened them, and now they rise again in their attempt to conquer the world

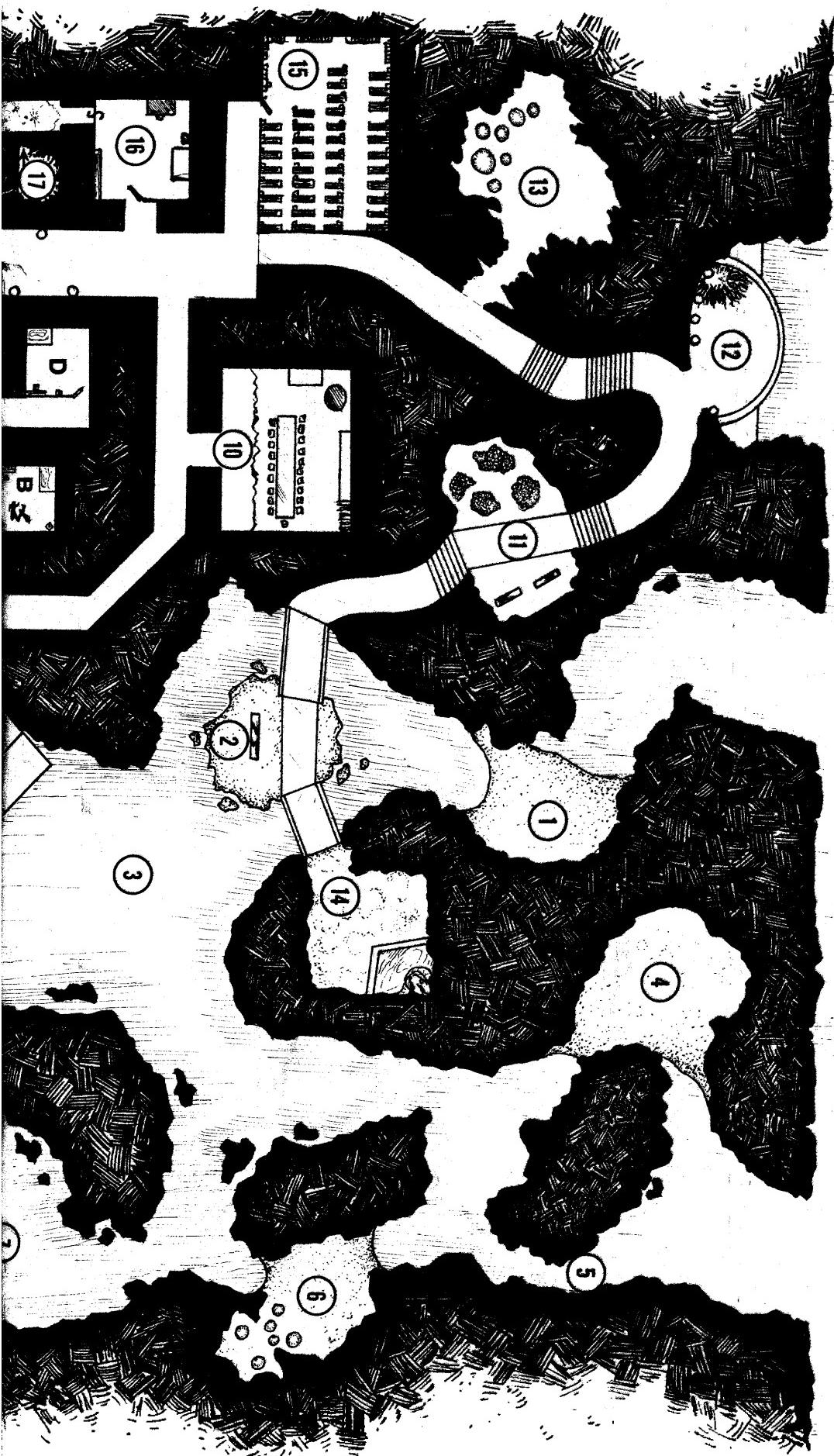
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THE TEMPLE OF POSEIDON



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can be removed from the magazine without altering the rest of the contents.*

for their evil lords! How are we to—Wait, a tremendous crash in the oracle chamber! Voices, too, I think. I must investigate."

The rest of the journal is blank.

The southern part of the chamber contains a small library of rare and arcane sea lore. Included are articles on water-based sorcery and treatises concerning the dread, dark powers that reside in the ocean depths. One of the books, bound in the hide of a giant eel, is a *Libram of Sea Sorcery*. Following one week of study, the tome will grant the reader the power to control sea creatures up to 16 hit dice in size as per a *charm monster* spell. The power may be employed but once per day, and the book may be read only once and by only one character. Another book, written in the language of the Triton, is entitled *The Secret Passage*. When it is opened to page 333, a secret door on the south wall will open into a small passage.

Room 17. [The secret passage continues for 10 feet and ends at a large metal portal. The portal opens with a slight push and exposes the entire room to view. Oil lanterns illuminate the small vault, which is filled with gold, silver, gems and jewelry. This is obviously the temple's treasure hoard, valuables acquired from the oracle's visitors in return for the counsel they received here.]

Before gaining any of the trove in front of them, the party must reckon with the vault's sentinel, an invisible Guardian Naga. The creature has 12 hit dice (85 hit points), armor class 0, movement 15", and can attack physically by constricting for 2-8 points and biting for 1-6. The Naga also spits lethal venom at opponents (once per melee round) up to 30 feet away, which will slay them unless they make their saving throw.

Although the Guardian possesses these physical attacks, in this situation it will opt first to use its magical abilities, for the Naga's state of invisibility will remain intact as long as it does not move quickly, as in melee, or use any of its physical attacks. The creature has the following spells at its disposal: *Cause light wounds*, *Fear*, *Hold person*, *Silence (15-foot radius)*, and *Cause blindness*. The Guardian will first cast *silence (15-foot radius)*. All within the room except the Naga must save or become deaf and dumb, unable to communicate or use spells. The creature will then use its *hold* spell on as many targets as possible. Following this, the Naga will quietly pass through the party, inflicting *blindness* and *light wounds*. Its touch is so light that there is only a 25% chance that anyone will notice contact. All the spells can be cast only once. Once the Guardian Naga's magic is exhausted, or if its invisible state is exposed, it will attack physically until slain.

The treasure consists of the following: 8,763 gold pieces (weighing about 900 pounds); 322 platinum pieces (weighing about 45 pounds); 15 gems worth 600 gold pieces each; 1 *polymorph self* potion with 2 doses left; 1 pouch of *Disappearance Dust* (2 doses); 1 *potion of giant strength* (cloud giant) and 1 heavy silver ring set with an aquamarine gem. The ring will grant the wearer the following powers:

1. Water breathing, unlimited duration and no depth limitation.
2. Swimming, as per the ring.
3. Once per day the bearer of this ring can fire a bolt of water 30 feet long and 2 feet in diameter. The water will travel 90 feet before losing its shape. All those in the bolt's path will take 3-36 points damage, be knocked back 1-10 feet, and must save vs. magic or have their lungs fill with water, drowning them in 1-3 melee rounds.

However, once slipped on, the ring will graft itself to the victim's hand and begin turning him into a Triton at the rate of 1% more change per day. Only 2 Wishes cast simultaneously can enable the wearer to remove the ring.

Room 18, Oracle Room. [Your party walks down a long, white corridor. Tall, fluted pillars line either side of the path. Finally, you come to the end of the corridor and pass through a high arched opening into a dark room. Your torches reveal the vague outlines of a huge chamber, about 80 feet long and at least 60 feet wide. The walls

are carved with seemingly alive ocean scenes. In the west end of the room there stands a gargantuan coral statue of Poseidon, wielding his great Trident. The statue has a tail which wraps around a bottomless oval pool filled with cerulean blue salt water. Boulders and rock fragments surround a ragged opening in the south wall. From this tunnel come noxious green fumes. In the dust surrounding the hole, tracks can be discovered. Some appear human, but most are long, wide swaths, as though something had been dragged across the area.]

If the party observes carefully, they will find that indeed the stone sea creatures carved into the walls move very slowly. It is as though a scene from hundreds of feet beneath the surface were transformed into living rock. Three melee rounds after the party has entered the room, the water in the pool will begin to froth and boil. During the next melee round, the head and torso of a bearded man will form and rise out of the water, reaching a total height of 15 feet. The man will slowly survey the room, and then say to the party, "It seems I am too late in penetrating the barrier. My temple is destroyed." If no one questions him, he will disappear in 2 melee rounds. If someone does query the watery form, that character may ask up to 3 questions which Poseidon will then answer. After responding to all the questions to be asked, Poseidon will say the following and then disappear: "If you go to avenge the deaths of my followers, then drink of my waters in times of need. But only once in the life of a mortal may you quaff this liquid, for it is derived from ambrosia and would surely slay any mortal a second time."

The pool will then fill with golden liquid. Each character may fill one container with a portion of the divine liquid. Regardless of how much is consumed at one time, the following will happen:

1. All damage to the drinker will be cured, back to the number of hit points with which he or she began the adventure.
2. All poison in the individual's body will be neutralized.
3. All disease in the drinker's body will be eradicated.

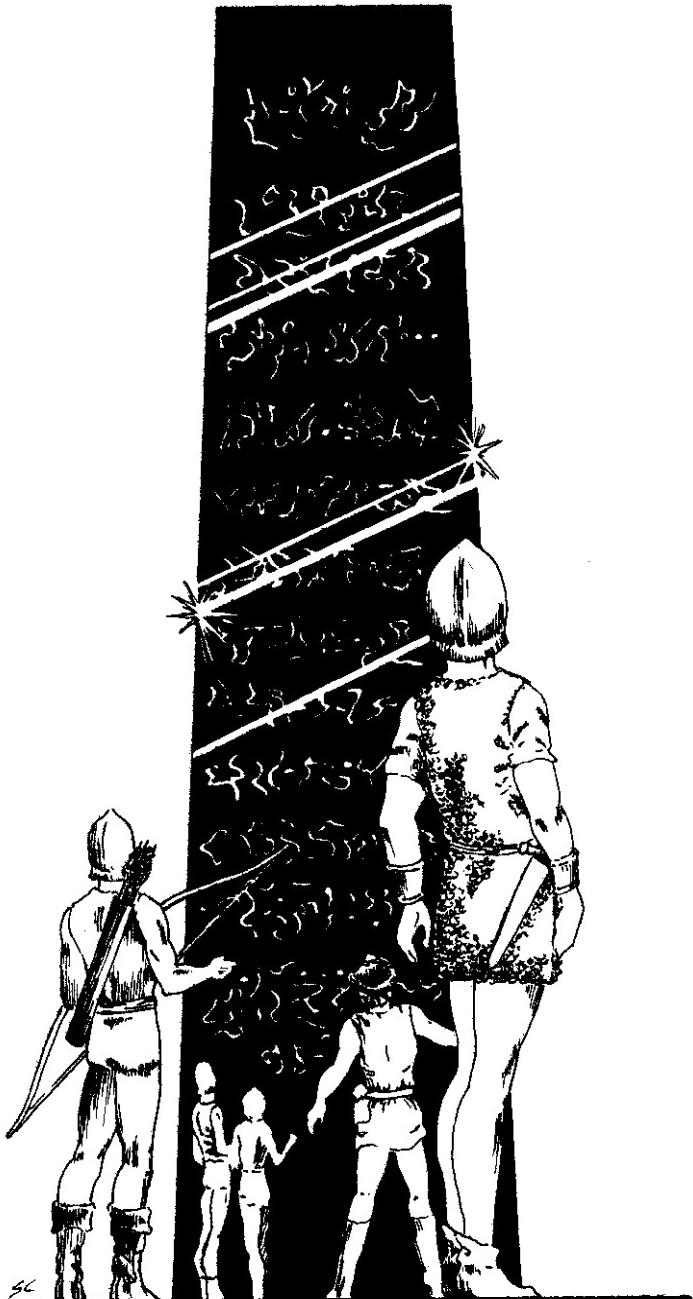
If someone partakes of the water a second time, regardless of how little the character consumes, the drinker will be slain with no saving throw applicable. The liquid remains potent for only 3 hours, after which it will transform back into sea water.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Time and the way the party spends it plays an integral part in this adventure. Exactly 10 turns after the characters descend the spiral staircase and enter the alien base, the evil priests of Ythog Nthlei will succeed in freeing their master. The only way to prevent them from attaining their goal is to kill them before the end of 10 turns. If they succeed, Ythog Nthlei will instantly move to Room 31 with his treasure: The priests will remain in their room.

Area 19. [The opening in the oracle room leads to a wide rent in the rock, which angles down. After several hundred yards, you reach a small chamber. On the south side of the cave there are steps leading up; however, they are blocked after only a few feet by mounds of rock and stone slabs. The other exit from this room leads to a pit 40 feet across and over 100 feet deep. Set against the wall, spiraling downward, is a long staircase. Six hundred and sixty-six steps descend to the bottom of the pit. On each step of the winding stairway there is carved in great detail a representation of one of the corresponding layers of the abyss. Each scene is more horrible than the one preceding it. A foul stench grows stronger with every foot you move downward, and your torches and lanterns begin to flicker and burn low.]

Room 20. [You leave the spiral staircase and enter the first passage of this alien complex. The corridor is 8-sided, and the walls are made of a smooth, gray material. The roof reaches a height of 24 feet. The fitful flames of your torches and lanterns die completely. However, you now notice that the walls emit a slight glow, granting clear sight for 40 feet. After walking a short distance you enter an octagonal chamber. In the middle of the chamber stands a shiny,



black, four-sided pillar that reaches up into the darkness above you. All four sides of the pillar are covered with grotesque runes and hieroglyphics. The north wall opens into a passage; however, a metallic, web-like barrier blocks your way. Unintelligible, chant-like whispers are heard coming from further down this blocked passageway. Another corridor opposite from the one you came in is unbarred and extends to the east out of sight.]

If the party wishes to break through the barrier, they must do so as per bending bars, at a penalty of 10% on the chance for success. The writings on the onyx column tell the history of this complex. If any of the party attempts to translate the glyphs, he will read the passage given below out loud, and then fall silent, reading the rest to himself. At the end of 1 melee round, the translator will then do one of the following things (roll d4):

1. Pass out, and be unable to recall anything beyond the section he spoke out loud when he revives.
2. Finish reading and say that there is nothing more of interest. However, unknown to the rest of the party, he has turned irrevocably lawful evil.
3. As the reader progresses through the work, he becomes increasingly agitated and will not let any of the party members

prevent him from continuing. At the end of the translation, he will begin to gibber and babble incoherently, for he has become permanently insane.

4. At the end of the reading, the translator will turn and begin to speak. However, a bolt of coruscating green energy will leap from the pillar and strike the character, killing him unless he makes a saving throw at -3. If he survives, the effects will be the same as in number 1.

The part spoken out loud goes as follows:

"During the ninth rotation of our galactic cluster in this the 34321st year of our Master's reign, we, the remaining children of the Great Lord Ythog-Nthlei do hereby register and sanctify this, our Holy Base. From these divine depths we shall build and grow until we have enough strength to release our Father, Zoth Ommog, from his imprisonment beyond the curtain of time."

Room 21. [The chanting becomes louder and louder as you approach this area. Your party reaches a tall, double door, made of the same material as the walls. The doors open with a strong push and reveal a bizarre scene. The room is large and 8-sided. In the center of the chamber there is a 15-foot-wide brazier roaring with yellow flames and giving off a foul, green smoke. Set into four of the walls are triangular grooves 5 feet deep and 12 feet high. Shards of a smoky, amber-like material surround each groove area. The most shocking element of this room is its occupants: Around the tall flames stand 4 loathsome creatures that sway and chant in a most inhuman fashion. Although the things are clad in long, flowing robes, the cloth is mostly tatters, and reveals their true forms. Each is nearly 10 feet tall, and has 2 long, triple-jointed, barbed legs. Extending from a scaled barrel-chest are 4 thick tentacles which each end in 8 opposing fingers. The head of the monster, perhaps the most hideous aspect, is totally inhuman. It is basically heart-shaped, cleaved down the middle. From either side of the head extend 2-foot-long, comb-like feelers, similar to those of a moth. Set on either side of the face are clusters of waving tendrils, each of which end in small eyes, giving the creature complete peripheral vision. On the bottom of the face there is a large circular orifice. When the beast opens this ring of flesh to scream, thousands of writhing wormlike tongues are exposed. As you stand in near shock surveying the inhuman scene, the creatures turn to confront you.]

These are the priests of the King Ythog-Nthlei, who lies imprisoned in the room downstairs. They chant for his release, and will succeed in this task 10 turns after the characters have entered the complex unless the priests are slain by then. After being freed from their bondage by a series of earthquakes, the priests first eliminated the human temple above and then went about reactivating their base. They are now in the final and most difficult stages of the task of freeing their leader from the tomb he was trapped in hundreds of years ago. The creatures will, of course, attack the party instantly. Their statistics are as follows: hit dice 7 (hit points 42 + 1-12), armor class 3, movement 18". Each of the priests is 40% magic resistant and is immune to poison, acid and cold attacks.

The evil priests attack with their 4 tentacle/hands for 2-12 points damage each. For every additional appendage that strikes a single target after the first, the priest will do 1-8 more points of damage, because he will then begin ripping his opponent apart. The dark creatures can also attack by extending their many-pointed tongues and piercing their opponents with them. This assault inflicts 1-6 points damage and will drain one of the enemy's senses. Roll d6 to determine which sense is drained:

1 = taste; 2 = smell; 3 = touch; 4 = hearing; 5 = sight; 6 = psychic or psionic abilities

If the victim makes his saving throw, the sense drain will last only 1-6 melee rounds before the ability returns. Otherwise, the only way to cure this loss is to cast a *Remove curse* spell and a *Restoration* spell simultaneously upon the afflicted character. If a roll calls for the draining of a sense the victim has already lost or never possessed, treat the roll as "no affect."



Room 22. [The opening leading from the priest's room connects to a set of stairs going down. However, covering the first 5 feet of the opening is a bright orange wall of light. The staircase leads down 100 feet and ends in a small chamber. On the east wall there are two glowing imprints of human hands, set about two feet apart. The entire south wall is composed of a set of 2 closed stone doors, criss-crossed with thick metal bands. Set in the middle of the door is a gold seal, 3 feet in diameter. Indecipherable writings have been carved into the disk.]

The orange light is actually a highly magical field of protection, preventing the priests from descending into the lower chambers. It will affect those who pass through it differently, depending upon what kind of creature they are. Humans passing through the area will feel dizzy and confused, but will suffer no other effects. Evil individuals will suffer the above with intense wracking pains and convulsions, as well. Any non-human who attempts to pass through the barrier of light must save versus death at -2. Even if the save is successful, the creature will still be repulsed, unable to enter the area.

The chamber at the bottom of the stairs is the outer portion of the prison of King Ythog-Nthlei, who lies in an enchanted slumber beyond the sealed portal. If someone places his hands on the two glowing spots, a three-dimensional image of a human sorcerer will appear and speak the following:

"We have at last imprisoned the Dark King, Ythog-Nthlei, here beneath his very base. The process cost more than we could have believed in time and lives. For over 200 years our brotherhood of magicians has struggled to prevent these sons of the old ones from releasing their horrible sires. Now only a few of us remain, but the task is complete. This image is a warning. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to enter the chamber beyond this door. Any transgression into the area will release the King from his bondage, and will surely spell your doom."

The image will then disappear. The doors may be opened at any time, but it will require the entire strength of the party to break the seal and the metal bonds holding it shut.

The room behind the gate is dominated by a long slab of marble upon which rests a monstrous sarcophagus, at least 15 feet in length. Tall urns filled with some mystic liquid stand burning at either end of the pallet, illuminating the chamber. Unless the stone coffin is opened, 2 melee rounds will pass before anything happens. Then,

with a tremendous explosion, the sarcophagus will shatter, revealing the unholy King. AH within 30 feet of the coffin will take 2-12 points of damage from the stone shrapnel.

The creature's form barely fits beneath the 20-foot-tall ceiling. The aspect of Ythog-Nthlei is that of a gargantuan synthesis of a man and some type of slug. He stands on a slimy, thick, snail-like appendage that sprouts from his human chest. In one humanoid hand he holds a long, black mace. His face is a mixture of bulbous snail antennae and evil human features. About his form Ythog-Nthlei wears a tattered yellow robe. The King has 26 hit dice (208 hit points), armor class -2, movement 12".

The King attacks his opponents with his large black mace. The weapon is +5, hits for 4-24 (+ 13 if wielded by Ythog-Nthlei) points damage, and drains one life level each time it hits. The mace can also radiate a field of darkness if a 30-foot radius, which totally obscures all vision, except that of the holder. The mace can animate 3-18 zombies of twice-normal strength once per week. Ythog-Nthlei can project scintillating beams of energy from his 4 large eyes at the rate of 1 per melee round. Each beam hits on a 4 or better and drains one point of Strength from its target for 1 turn unless the victim makes a saving throw. The King may also bite, inflicting 3-18 points damage, and injecting a poison into his opponent. A poison victim must save at -2 or fall under the control of the creature for 1-10 turns. Ythog-Nthlei is immune to all non-magical attacks and reflects any type of spell cast at him back to the enchantment's sender.

If the party succeeds in slaying this creature, they will find a small bag made of black, velvety material that contains 10 *loun stones*. The collection of stones consists of the following:

2 pale blue rhomboids (each adds 1 point to Strength up to a maximum of 18); 2 scarlet and blue spheres (each adds 1 point to Intelligence up to a maximum of 18); 1 incandescent blue sphere (adds 1 point to Wisdom up to a maximum of 18); 1 deep red sphere (adds 1 point to Dexterity up to a maximum of 18); 1 pink rhomboid (adds 1 point to Constitution up to a maximum of 18); 1 clear spindle (sustains person without food or water); 1 iridescent spindle (sustains person without air); and 1 dusty rose prism (gives +1 protection). *loun stones* whirl about their user's head in an orbit of about 3 feet. Whenever *loun stones* are attacked, they are to be treated as armor class -4. If they take IQ points of damage, they will turn dull gray and be forever useless. They save as if they were made of hard metal which is +3 in enchantment.

Area 23. [A 20-foot long staircase leads up to an 8-sided room 30 feet across. In the center of the room sits a 7-foot-tall, glowing pyramid. The construction has 3 sides, each 10 feet long at the base, and is made of a bluish, translucent material. Dull glimmers of light flicker from the center of the tetrahedron, revealing a strange, crystalline network of dark fibers within the structure. As you watch the pyramid, the light coming from within intensifies.]

This area served as a communications link between the members of the base crew and their leaders. Through psychic stimulation, the device can be activated, as displayed by the increased internal luminescence when the party studies the pyramid. The relic was also used as an interdimensional portal, which transported the inhuman creatures' brethren across space and time to assist them in their unholy cause.

There is a possibility that members of the party can initiate full function capacity from the pyramid through intense concentration. The chance of success, dependent solely upon an individual's Intelligence, is as follows:

Intelligence	Chance of success
13 or less	No chance of activation
14 or 15	15% chance of activation
16 or 17	30% chance of activation
18 or better	60% chance of activation

Every member of the party may try only once. A failure indicates complete inability to operate the machine. Success causes one of the following events to occur (roll d8):

1. A scene from the astral plane appears on all of the faces of the pillars.
2. Same as 1, but this time it is the ethereal plane.
3. A view of Room 21 appears for a few short seconds, then fades back to the pyramid material.
4. As with 3, but with Room 22.
5. As with 3, but with Room 31.
6. A tableau of stars forms within the pyramid. The portal would appear to lead to deepest intergalactic space, from which the evil ones, no doubt, emerged.

7. The eye of Zoth Ommog appears in the pyramid and turns to confront the person controlling the machine. The controller must make a saving throw vs. magic or die permanently. If he does save, he will succumb to a random insanity for 1-100 days.

8. The image of a lesser devil of random type appears in the pyramid. The demon will follow the controller's first command explicitly; however, if it is not directed, it will disappear in 2 melee rounds and will do so, in any case, after it has fulfilled the single command.

In the first 6 cases, anyone may pass into the scene projected by simply stepping into one of the faces of the pyramid. However, the portal is one-way, and once someone has moved through the device, he may not return. If someone enters deepest outer space, he will, of course, explode and freeze simultaneously, dying in the process.

Area 24. [You enter this room from the southwest wall. Corridors lead away from the chamber in both the north and northeast walls. Chairs circle the area, facing inward, and bizarre, abstract sculptures extrude randomly from the chamber floor, creating insane angles and casting hideous shadows. There is a 20-foot-wide circle of gleaming silvery metal inset in the exact middle of the floor. Strains of high, atonal, whispering music filter through the area.]

This section of the complex was used by the aliens as a combination commons, recreation and meditation area. It was also an important nexus of travel throughout the complex; not only does it have 3 passages radiating outward, but it also has 1 passage exiting down through the metallic iris in the center of the room. If any party member stands on the metallic area, the iris will open up, leaving a 20-foot-wide circular hole in the floor. Anyone standing in the area will fall 20 feet to the bottom of the pit, incurring 3-18 points damage. At one

time the shaft contained a kinetic absorption field which slowed the user's fall; however, it is not operational now.

Room 25. [The party travels up 10 feet of stairs and passes through an open door into a huge, round room. The walls angle inward toward the octagonal floor, making a kind of flat-bottomed dish. A line of chairs, set into the sloping sides up near the ceiling, circle the outer rim of the room. A narrow staircase leads down to the floor. The surface of the area is made of some kind of coppery metal. Inset into the center of the floor is a thick metal ring. Spaced evenly about the perimeter of the area are 8 holes, each 2 feet in diameter. From these holes come deep rumblings and foul smells. A large stain of human blood covers most of the floor.]

This area was used by the complex's residents as both a recreation facility and a sacrificial altar. The prisoners were led to the floor area and chained there to the ring set in the middle. Drawn by the smell of prey, hideous creatures emerged from the holes and devoured the helpless victims.

If any of the party takes more than one step on the floor, the vibrations of footsteps will summon the Devil Wyrm from their abodes. Simultaneously, the 8 long annelids will squiggle out of the openings and attack all those in the area. Each has 7 hit dice (hit points 40 plus 1-12), armor class 3, and movement 8". The appearance of the Devil Wyrm is that of a pink, fat worm, 20 feet long and about 1½ feet in diameter. Each segment of the creature is made of a kind of chitinous armor, giving the creature its low armor class. The Wyrm has no head to speak of, but rather has a kind of serrated mouth at either end. Each of the monster's openings can attack once per melee round, delivering 2-12 points damage. In addition, once every 3 melee rounds, the creatures can spit an acidic venom on a single target up to 30 feet away that will cause 3-18 points damage and paralyze the victim unless he makes his saving throw. A saving throw results in no paralyzation effect and full damage.

Once all of the Wyrm have been slain, their dark dens may be searched. Within each lair, the party will find a mound of partially eaten human bodies. The party has found the missing residents of the Temple of Poseidon. In addition, within one of the tunnels the adventurers will find a small necklace made of strung miniature skulls. Each of the 3 skulls may be removed and used in combat. It will then transform into a random type of demon (1-6). The summoned creature will follow the necklace wearer's commands for 1 day or until the wearer is slain. The demon will then disappear. The summoned demon may not gate in another demon.

Area 26. [You enter a dark, round room, 20 feet across. The air is humid, sticky, almost wet, and smells vaguely acidic. As you walk in, you notice the floor is slick and spongy, and there is an opening across from the door you came in.]

This chamber acts as the "bars" for the prison beyond. The guards consist of a deadly duo: a Trapper and a Lurker Above, acting in concert. The Trapper has 12 hit dice (85 hit points), armor class 3, movement 0. The Lurker Above has 10 hit dice (63 hit points), armor class 6, movement 0. As the party fills the room, or when they realize their predicament, the pair will immediately pounce upon their prey. The Lurker will drop down and the Trapper will snap up, delivering a total of 2-16 points of crushing damage per melee round to those within the room. In addition, each member of the party will not be able to move unless they roll one-half their Dexterity or less on a 20-sided die. The characters will asphyxiate in 2-5 melee rounds after being attacked (roll for each character).

Both creatures must be slain before the characters are released. However, if one is killed, the damage per turn will be halved from then on, and the amount of time left before smothering to death will be doubled.

Among the debris beneath the Trapper are 800 platinum pieces, a pair of earrings set with blue diamonds worth 4,500 gold pieces

each, and a clerical cross that strikes all targets as though they were armor class 4, delivering 2-12 points damage, and can resurrect the dead once per week.

Area 27. [A series of 10 steps descend into this large area. Each of the steps is made of a different precious stone or metal. Listed from the top in order, they are onyx, amethyst, topaz, carnelian, bloodstone, silver, ruby, moonstone, chrysoprase, and gold. The chamber is at least 100 feet long with 10-foot-wide platforms at either end. Between the platforms runs a 15-foot-wide causeway, raised 6 inches above the level of two adjoining pools. It appears that magical "rails" once protected those walking along the path from beasts within the pools. However, broken posts and slimy trails across the way suggest that the enchanted defenses are no longer potent. The pools themselves are muddy and overgrown with algae and swamp grass. Slurping sounds come from beneath the muck.]

Removing pieces of the stairs will require 5 turns per stair and will provide 1,600 gold pieces worth of chips. The swampy area was once the pool of contemplation in which the horrid residents of this base spent most of their free time. Actually, aside from the broken railings, the mucky swamp has changed little over the years, since the form of meditation the aliens most enjoyed usually involved watching the violent death struggles of creatures in the muck. As the adventurers pass across the causeway, they will probably be attacked by the swamp residents. Each time the adventurers pass a numbered area, there is a 75% chance that they will be attacked by the monster designated by that number.

1. *Shambeling Mound.* Hit dice 10 (hit points 63), armor class 0, movement 6". Attacks with pulpy arms for 2-16 points each and if both hit, the target will suffocate in 2-5 melee rounds, unless the Shambeling Mound is killed. It is immune to fire and cold, and lightning causes it to grow 1-3 hit dice in size.

2. *Shambeling Mound.* Hit dice 10 (hit points 74), armor class 0, movement 6". Attacks as number 1.

3. *Giant Toad.* Hit dice 2 + 4 (hit points 18), armor class 6, movement 6". Bites for 3-12 points damage.

4. *Giant Toad.* Hit dice 2 + 4 (hit points 16) armor class 6, movement 6". Attacks as number 3.

5. *Ice Toad.* Hit dice 5 (hit points 34), armor class 4, movement 9". Ice toads bite for 3-12, and every other melee round can generate a field of cold in a 10-foot radius around them for 3-18 points, save for half damage.

6. *Ice Toad.* Hit dice 5 (hit points 33), armor class 4, movement 9". Attacks as number 5.

7. *Poisonous Toad.* Hit dice 2 (hit points 15), armor class 7,

movement 6". Bites for 2-12 points damage, plus save versus deadly venom.

8. *Poisonous Toad.* Hit dice 2 (hit points 10), armor class 7, movement 6". Attacks as number 7.

9. *Giant Crayfish.* Hit dice 4 + 4 (hit points 36), armor class 4, movement 8". Attacks with 2 claws for 2-12 each.

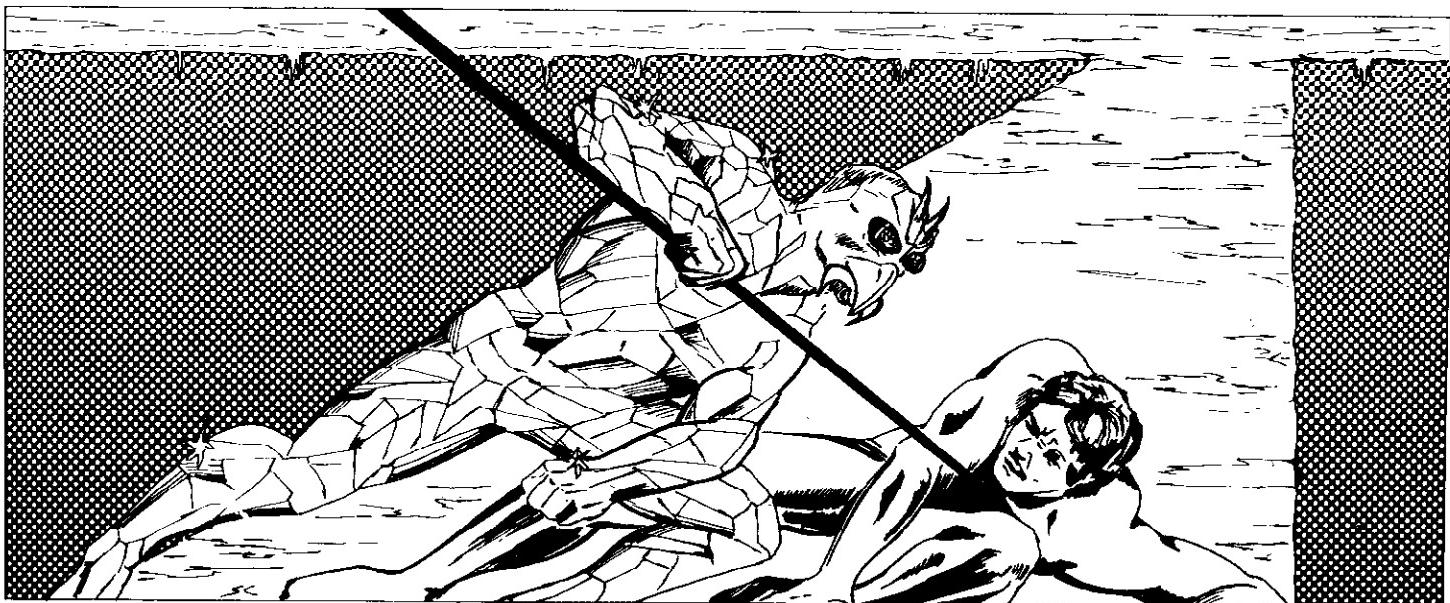
10. *Giant Crayfish.* Hit dice 4 + 4 (hit points 30), armor class 4, movement 8". Attacks as number 9.

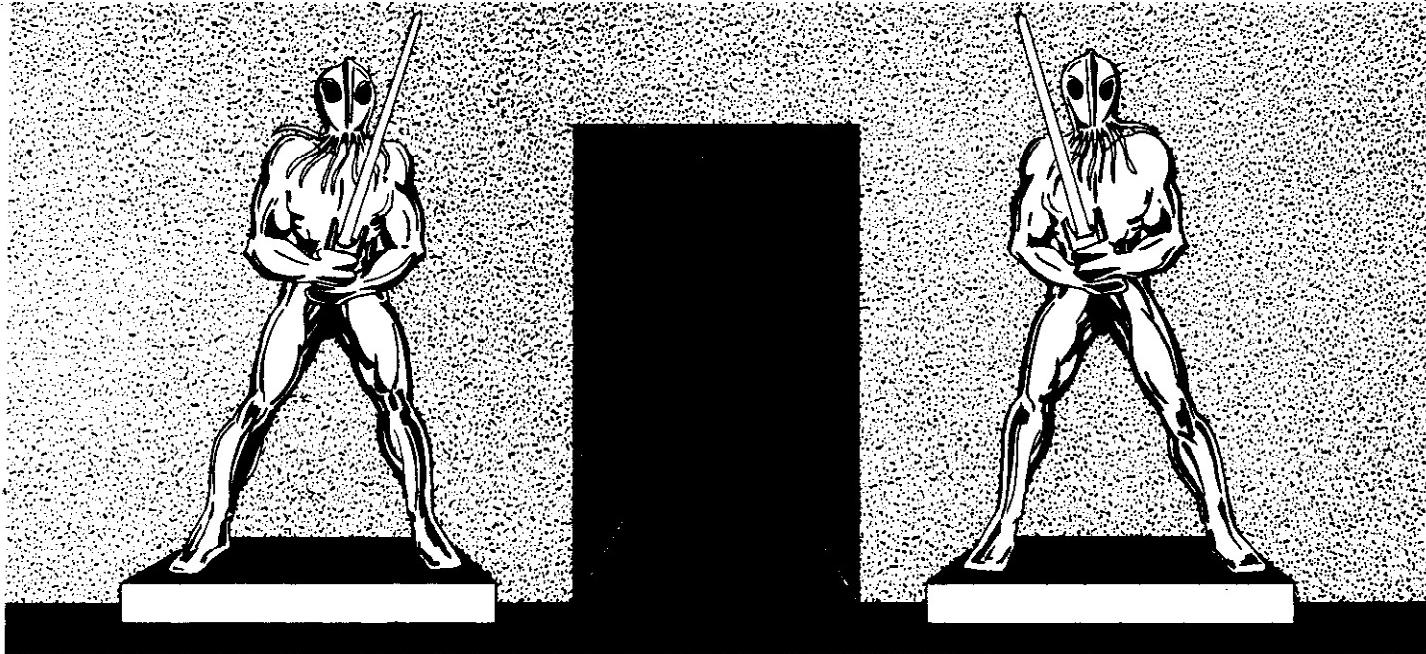
If the Crayfish are cut open, the party will find a shield inside one of them. The shield is banded with mithril, giving it an enchantment of +4. In addition, the insignia on the item is that of a coiled king cobra preparing to strike. Once per day the holder of this shield may command the serpent to attack. The cobra will strike from the shield as a g-hit-dice monster and inflict 1-4 points of damage while injecting a neurotoxic poison. The enemy struck must save versus poison at -2 or die.

Area 28. [An arched opening leads to a thin (5-foot-wide) bridge across a deep pit. The path is coated with ice and coming from the darkness beneath the party can hear a clacking, as though bones were being knocked together.]

A fireball or similar flaming attack will remove all the ice covering the bridge. Any flying or levitation in this area is impossible. The guardian of the chasm will emerge from the darkness of the southern opening and attack the first person who reaches the middle of the pathway. The guardian, an Ice Devil, has 11 hit dice (88 hit points), armor class -1, movement 6", magic resistance 55%. The 11-foot-tall creature carries a great spear with which it impales its opponents, needing an 8 or better to hit all armor classes. Anyone struck will take 2-12 plus 6 points damage, and must save or be paralyzed by the numbing cold. The victim will, in addition, be knocked off the platform unless he rolls one-half his Dexterity or less. If the ice has been removed from the bridge, the victim gets +4 to this die roll. The Ice Devil can attack with its mandibles and tail for 2-8 and 3-12 points damage, respectively. Once during the battle, the Devil can cause an ice storm, inflicting 3-30 points damage to all within the room. The Devil regenerates 1 point per melee round. Those who are knocked off the bridge fall 30 feet to the bottom and suffer 3-18 points damage. They are stunned for 2 melee rounds, as well.

Within the pit are 2 Malebranche, or Homed Devils. Each has 5 hit dice, armor class 5, movement 9"/18", magic resistance 50%. Each attacks for 1-4 with its bite and also with a weapon. One carries a two-tined fork which does 2-12 points damage and stuns for a similar length of time unless a save versus magic is made. Once per day the Malebranches can create a wall of fire, which causes 3-24 points of damage to all within its confines.





Room 29. [You enter a large, square room, lit by 4 floating orbs that shine a brilliant green. On either side of the room there is a great procession of pillars which each have 8 faces. An opening in the far end of the chamber leads to a dark area of unknown size. Two 13-foot-tall iron statues stand to either side of the opening. Each looks somewhat humanoid, as it has 2 legs and carries a great sword in its two 3-fingered hands. However, the head of each statue much closer resembles that of a Mind Flayer, having 2 bulbous eyes separated by a bony ridge. Where a human mouth might be, the sculpture's face forms into 8 long ciliated tentacles.]

If the adventurers do not come within 25 feet of the statues, the structures will remain inanimate. In this condition, the figures will not be detected as evil, alive, or even magical. However, if someone does come within the prescribed radius, the 2 statues will suddenly and without warning come to life and attack. Each of the metallic creatures has 10 hit dice (80 hit points), armor class -6, movement 6". Before engaging their enemies physically, the living statues will first use their psychic blasts. Each blast of mental energy will affect a conical area 40 feet long and 25 feet wide directly in front of the statue. It will inflict 7-42 points damage to all within the area. In addition, all affected must make their saving throw or pass out for 10 melee rounds due to the psychic assault. If a victim makes his saving throw, he will take half damage and have all his psionic abilities disabled for 1-10 turns. The Guardians can do this only once. After blasting their opponents, the animated constructs will engage their opponents with their long, bizarre swords. Each of the oddly shaped weapons will strike at +5, and if successful, will inflict 4-40 points damage with its serrated edge. The attack can hit up to 4 opponents in a single swing if they are all within 15 feet of the statue. Each of the statues is immune to fire. Lightning and acid add to their hit points in a 1:1 ratio. They are 40% magic resistant and cannot be hit by weapons of less than +2 in enchantment.

The glowing orbs may be retrieved and each will glow with the light of a full moon for the next 10,000 years.

Area 30. [The long corridor leads to a blank wall. However, as you approach the dead end, a thick slab of the wall material slides back. The entrance leads to a small room whose floor and ceiling are riddled with hundreds of small holes about the width of one's finger. Set in the north wall there is an oddly displayed assortment of grooves and depressions which glow a bright yellow-green. A crack in the wall opposite you indicates that there is indeed an exit out, similar to the one you came in.]

This room served as a security chamber, ensuring that no un-

wanted visitors passed through this area. If the party has already encountered the priests, they will recognize the mark in the wall as the imprint of the priests' hand tentacles. The only way to bypass this security measure is to perfectly imitate the inhuman hand, either by cutting one from one of the creatures and using it, or by polymorphing a part of one of the character's bodies to the proper size and shape. If performed successfully, the slab on the other side of the room will open, allowing passage through the area.

If the party attempts to use their own hands to activate the glowing imprint, the door behind them will slide shut, cutting anything in its path in half. Characters in the doorway are allowed to roll half their Dexterity or less to jump out of the slab's path. Then, from the many holes in the ceiling, rot grubs will emerge and drop down onto the trapped party. Every melee round from 1-10 of these hideous, wormlike creatures will attack each character. Every successful attack will indicate that the rot grub has burrowed beneath the person's skin and is slowly eating its way to the victim's heart. Unless fire is applied to each wound (1-6 points damage to the person per application), or a *cure disease* spell is cast, the grubs will reach the heart in 3-30 melee rounds, killing the victim.

The only unorthodox way to escape the room is to destroy one of the doors leading out. The portals will each sustain 150 points of damage before breaking open. A *Disintegrate* or *Polymorph any object* spell will succeed in removing the obstacle 50% of the time.

Room 31. [This appears to be the throne room of the complex. Directly in front of the party there is a strange type of chair, clearly made for some inhuman creature several times the size of a man. The throne is inlaid with many precious stones. On either side of the room there is a large, two-faced stone effigy 20 feet tall. The eyes of the carvings gleam with inner flame and seem to watch the party as it moves about the room.]

If Ythog-Nthlei has escaped his bondage, he will appear on the throne and attack the party as it enters (see Room 22 for his statistics). Otherwise, the room will remain free from aggressors. However, anyone who enters the area must save versus fear due to the hideous, leering faces on either wall. If they fail, they will run from the room at top speed and will not return to the area under any circumstances. A saving throw results in no effect.

The stones in the throne may be removed with little difficulty and will be worth a total of 20,000 gold pieces. If the adventurers try to pry the shining eyes from the 2 large statues, they will find the orbs to be actually living eyes that, when punctured, ooze a thick, yellowish fluid and then dry out and wither.

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Three views of Greyhawk

*The wait
was worth it*

by Jeff Seiken

If, as the saying goes, a good thing is worth waiting for, then *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK*, a fantasy world setting for Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™, should be one of the finest products to come from TSR™ in a long time. Often promised, but often delayed, *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK* sometimes appeared destined to never see the light of publication. In the meantime, the gaming public had to be satisfied with occasional tantalizing references in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and reading the background information of the various dungeon modules from TSR. Then just as Gary Gygax himself (in *Dragon*™ magazine #37) assured us that, barring any catastrophe, *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK* was ready for official release, a catastrophe did indeed strike and once more, gamers were left staring at the empty shelves in their local hobby shops and scratching their heads in puzzlement. Soon the summer was fast disappearing, along with most of our expectations, but on a fateful day in early August, the cherished cry was finally raised. *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK* had arrived!



Of course, all of the above is past history and what is of importance now is the finished product. *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK* sells for \$10 and comes handsomely packaged in a colorful folder. Included are two multi-colored maps and a 32-page gazetteer. The outside covers of the folder are adorned with the numerous coats-of-arms of the various states, cities and factions chronicled within the gazetteer, and on the inside covers is a key to their correct identification.

The two maps are easily the highlight of the product, and I know of some people who

would have been willing to pay \$10 for the maps alone. Designed to be fitted together in the center, they form a huge 34x44-inch playing surface. The small hexagons, about 3/8 of an inch in diameter, add to the appearance of the maps' great size and scope. There are more than twenty-five different terrain types, including walled and unwalled cities and towns, mountains, volcanos, tropical jungle, coniferous forests and black ice. Even the water is color-coded according to depth. Overall, the mapsheets cover an area approximately twelve million square miles in size and offer plenty of space for characters to adventure over. Both maps were drawn by Darlene, and she and the TSR art department deserve to be congratulated for their quality. Unfortunately, the one major drawback to the maps is that they seem to be of dubious accuracy in several places. For example, the town of Willip and the cities of Radigast and Leukish are all mentioned in the gazetteer as being ports on the Nyr Dyv. However, when looking at the maps, one sees that each of the three are located in complete land hexes with the shore of the lake reaching only into the adjacent hexes. In each case, there appears to have been enough room to have drawn the city or town symbol in the same hex as the shoreline, but as the maps stand now, with each hex representing 30 miles, these places look to be about 15 miles inland. Although the gazetteer corrects any misconceptions in this instance, what about the many other areas on the maps where a city or town is in a hex adjacent to a river or coastline? Is it actually there, so is it supposed to be a port?

While the maps are the main attention grabber, the gazetteer is the meat of *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK*, without which it would be impossible to tell the difference between a tiger nomad and a member of



the Scarlet Brotherhood. The gazetteer is in the form of a chronicle written by a historian native to the world. The first few pages of the gazetteer include a table of contents, a foreword written by Allen Hammack (dated February 6, 1979, more than 18 months before the product's release) and a map legend and key. Reading onward, one discovers that the maps cover only the eastern portion of the Oerik Continent, one of four such continents on the Planet Oerth.

There follows a brief discussion on the days and months of the year plus the climate and seasons of the Flanaess, as this portion of the continent is called. The introduction to the Flanaess concludes with a brief history of the region, a series of helpful maps and a short section on the ancient and current languages of the land. The next 8% pages are devoted to a survey of the 59 states within the Flanaess. For each state is listed its name; the title of its ruler along with his/her class and level; its capital; its human population, demi-human population (meaning elves, dwarves, etc.), and humanoid population (orcs, goblins, etc.); its basic resources; and finally a number of paragraphs describing the state in greater detail. The written portion delves into the state's military and political history, the basic make-up of its standing army and any other pertinent facts.

A survey of the geographical features of the land occupies the next major part of the gazetteer. Bodies of water, hills and highlands, marshes and swamps, mountain ranges, rivers and forests are all covered in varying amounts of detail. Also included are the general locations of most of the TSR dungeon modules which are located within the land. A half page each on precedence and the orders of knighthood, plus a four-page glossary of portentous runes and glyphs, round out the gazetteer.

Reading through the entire 32 pages should give one a pretty good understanding of the world depicted on the map, but there are places where a little more information would have been useful. One rather surprising omission is the lack of virtually any reference to the various religions predominant in the land. Religion played a crucial role in the shaping of the history of our own Middle Ages and was the direct cause behind much of the conflict of that era. However, in the gazetteer, the only religious confrontations mentioned are those of the basic good vs. evil variety, despite the fact that a number of states have high-level Clerics as rulers.

Also needed, but not included, is a chapter on the famous personalities of the world. In the foreword, Mr. Hammack asks the reader, "Do the names Tenser and Mordenkainen ring a bell?" For most of us, the answer is yes, but with the exception of a single sentence relating to their birthplace, neither character is ever mentioned again in the gazetteer. At the very least, the information included in *Dragon* #37 should have been incorporated into the gazetteer.

Both of the aforementioned complaints are relatively minor, but there is a deeper problem with *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK*. Across the cover of each TSR dungeon module are the words "Advanced Dungeons & Dragons" emblazoned in bold lettering, but this is not the case with *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK*. Instead, we have the phrase "Approved for use with Advanced Dungeons & Dragons" in small writing near the bottom of the cover. On the front page of the gazetteer, it reads "Suitable for use with Advanced Dungeons & Dragons" in equally small letters. Therein lies the real problem. Suitable, yes, but designed specifically for *AD&D* I am not so sure. *AD&D*, with its basically simple combat and magic systems, is unlike other role-

playing games in its emphasis on the sense of the fantastic. Who wants to worry about fatigue, endurance and critical hits, or spend six months learning a simple spell while there are lost cities to explore, magical castles to conquer and vast labyrinths populated with all manners of horrid creatures to loot? It is this same sense of the fantastic, however—the source of *AD&D*'s incredible popularity—that sadly enough seems to be lacking from *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK*. There are no thrilling revelations in the gazetteer or maps, nor is anything astounding disclosed. The world presented is very complete, logical and interesting, but the burden is on the DM to transform *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK* into *The Fantastic WORLD OF GREYHAWK*.

‘A universal constant’

by Kenneth W. Burke

Since the introduction of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™*, there has been something lacking in the game: a suitable area to conduct the campaign in. True, the majority of adventures take place underground and do not require such an area, and true, *AD&D* adventuring is mainly an indoor-type activity that involves the exploration of old castles, towers, and the like, but many players wanted more. They wanted something that would tell them where the adventures were taking place—an environment that would act as a starting point from which all adventures would originate. Ideas were exchanged, lands were created, but there was always something lacking—a universal constant which would be used and accepted by all *AD&D* players and DMs. Finally, after years of waiting, the universal, official constant has arrived. It is **THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK**.

The gazetteer goes into great detail concerning Eastern Oerik—we are told its history, introduced to its time scales, calendars and festivals, even given a small map showing all of Oerik. Minor flaws can be found—the gazetteer mentions movement over roads and through tracks, yet no symbol is given to show us what they look like. I see no roads on the mapboard, only dot-like paths through certain mountain ranges which I assume to be either roads or, more than likely, tracks. The gazetteer also does not tell us the symbols for thorps or dorfs, hamlets, villages or wychs, towns, and cities; they must be determined from looking at the map key on the cardboard folder, or through guesswork.

The major part of the gazetteer deals with the numerous kingdoms of Eastern Oerik. There is a thorough, detailed description of each kingdom. There are things about some of the provinces that annoy me—one, the Scarlet Brotherhood, is ruled by the Master of Autumn (a fourteenth-level monk, lawful good alignment mandatory). Despite his alignment, he

leads an organization also composed of thieves and assassins, something lawful good types are not allowed to do. Two other provinces I find annoying are the Amedio Jungle and Hepmonaland, also a jungle province. The map says that both are inhabited by "savages"; the gazetteer describes one, the Amedio Jungle, as "inhabited by tribes of cannibal savages." This talk of "savages" reminds me of the Tarzan movies that depicted black Africans as stupid "yasa, Bwana" types or animal-like monsters that would kill everyone they came across, usually via some barbaric method reminiscent of Josef Mengle. To use such terms in the product is an indirect insult to the black man, and should not have been done. The "cannibal" charge is just as preposterous—contrary to what one believes, there has never been a case of cannibalism carried out on a large-sized, organized scale over a long period of time by any tribe or nation in Africa, as well as the rest of the world (Sawney Bean and his family were a simple local affair, and no excuses about Eastern Oerik being located on the planet Oerth, not Earth). The "official" reports of cannibalism carried out on a large scale were little more than lies that natives of opposing African tribes would tell white explorers and settlers to gain their allegiance (and their firearms). The whole thing is an aspect the game could have done without. All in all, though, the manual is quite accurate; anything it does not cover is allegedly due to "lack of certain knowledge about the area," or so the gazetteer claims. You be the judge.

On a scale of one to ten, *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK* deserves a rating of nine. It has its problems, but these are due mainly to its size and scope. *THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK* is the largest *AD&D* campaign map produced to date, and as such is almost certain to be less than perfect. If anything, it is a sign of the continuing popularity of the *D&D®* and *AD&D* game systems, a popularity that is apparently destined to keep increasing.

The official word

'Grey' areas were made that way

by Lawrence Schick

Vice President, Product Development
TSR Hobbies, Inc.

The editors of *Dragon* magazine have allotted some space for us to provide some answers and clarifications to the points raised in Mr. Seiken's and Mr. Burke's reviews of *The World of Greyhawk*. We always appreciate an opportunity to explain what we do and why we do it.

I guess the full intent of WoG is not completely clear from the information presented in the Gazetteer. The idea was to provide a setting for a fantasy campaign, a coherent place where fantastic things could happen. As Mr. Seiken points out, the burden of creating the fantasy itself rests squarely on the shoulders of the Dungeon Master. Though *The World of Greyhawk* is based on Gary Gygax's own campaign, it was made deliberately vague in many areas so that individual DMs could impress their own ideas and personalities upon it.

For example, there are no specific trails and roads marked on the map. Who knows exactly where a DM may wish to place his or her trade routes? There are also no specific

leaders given for the individual states, enabling DMs to use whatever personalities they feel are most appropriate. There are certainly no religions given, as this is an area that almost all DMs handle differently and individually. (However, for those interested, the Deities of Greyhawk will appear somewhere, sometime in the next five years.) (Gary—is that vague enough?)

World-building is very important, but creating a coherent world is not easy. We wanted to give DMs a push in the right direction without doing everything for them. We certainly don't want to have everybody playing on carbon-copy worlds, doing the same things in every campaign. This imposes too many restrictions on the DM's imagination. Our intent instead is to spur that imagination to its own creations.

To address a couple of minor, specific points from the reviews: Yes, monks have to be lawful, but they can be lawful good, lawful neutral, or lawful evil, like the monks who rule the Scarlet Brotherhood. It's the discipline of lawfulness that makes a monk, not the ethical values of good or evil. As regards the savages, nowhere in the text of the Gazetteer is there any indication of

anybody's skin color. Nobody here ever gave it any thought, because it doesn't matter. On the subject of cannibalism: Anthropology has as little to do with fantasy as any of the other sciences. We're dealing with legends and archetypes. In fantasy literature, cannibalism is a typical attribute of nasty people who live in distant areas, and no one should be surprised to find references to it in a description of a fantasy world. Only actual cannibals have cause to be insulted for being referred to as savages.

We did make some mistakes. The settlement symbols got left out of the book on part of the first run. (This is typical of the bad luck that surrounded the production of this product.) In an error in the direction of esthetics over accuracy, some of the port and river settlement symbols got displaced a bit. Rule of thumb: If it's within a hex of the shore, it's a port. The same goes for river towns. By the way, the dotted lines through the mountains indicate passes.

The World of Greyhawk had a long and painful gestation period, but it turned into a child we're all proud of. Yes, there will be more Greyhawk-linked products in the future. When? Oh, no, you don't

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*Published by:

Simon and Schuster

Retail price:

\$17.95 hardbound,
\$8.95 paperback

by Tony Watson

Gaming has garnered a lot of attention lately from people outside of our hobby. The growth of the hobby in general, the increase in availability of games and associated materials and the spotlight that has been placed on certain individual games (D&D® most notably) have combined to bring the hobby of gaming to the attention of the world at large. Newspaper feature editors have found that covering a gaming convention and interviewing a few would-be Napoleons or Conans makes interesting copy for the Sunday edition. But ours is not an easy hobby to get into for the neophyte; scores of companies produce hundreds of games and rulebooks on a multitude of subjects, and these vary consid-

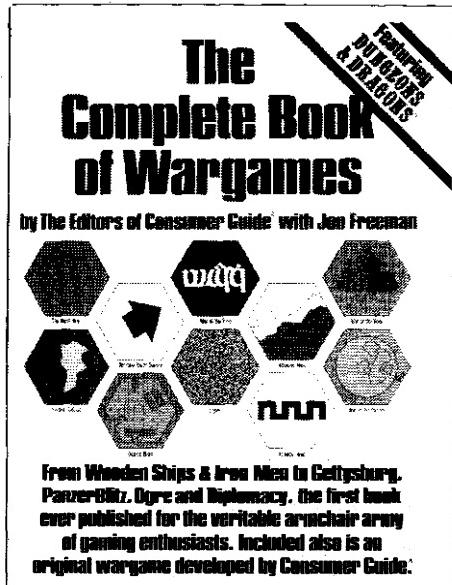
erably in quality and complexity. Any newcomer to gaming, especially one not entering via introduction by a friend who already plays, would probably appreciate a general overview of the hobby.

and mention is made of most of the other important companies. The chapter also includes some arbitrary player categories that attempt to explain what types of people play wargames. Chapter two, The Nature of the Beast, is an effort to come to grips with a definition of a wargame, discussing things such as topics and scale and the problems of realism versus playability. The next chapter, All's Not Fair, takes the task of definition one step further by explaining the components of modern boardgames. Hexfields and terrain types are explained, while the advantages of counters, which allow almost infinite variation, are elucidated. The concept of the CRT is discussed and the chapter deals a little with what is certainly the most forbidding terrain of any wargame to the newcomer (and many of us veterans), the rulebook.

Chapter four is an introductory game (though readers will have to provide their own counters), *Kassala*. The game is very simple, but manages to introduce most of the important concepts in wargaming. The game is interesting and kind of fun to play. It is an eminently better and more substantial introductory game than that turkey from SPI designed for the same purpose, *Strike force One*, which probably chased off more converts than it attracted. The final chapter, Playing to Win, handles some of the more important factors in winning play, such as understanding the victory conditions, reading a CRT, maximizing odds, using terrain, and defensive tactics of the hexgrid.

Part II of the book is comprised of game evaluations. These are capsule reviews of various games grouped according to historical era. Twelve categories exist, from ancient through Napoleonic to the two world wars, modern warfare and SF and fantasy games. Role-playing and computer games are each also given separate chapters. Each chapter begins with a few pages of introductory material about the period to be discussed and concludes with roughly ten reviews of games in the respective genres. The reviews vary in length but all include publisher, subject, price, an estimate of playing time, scale and physical size. The game is briefly described and comments are made on balance and key features. Each review ends with evaluations of the game's presentation, rules, playability, realism and complexity. The reviews are subjective, and I found myself in disagreement over some of the evaluations, but generally they are interesting and useful.

I would suggest this book as a fine introduction to wargaming for the novice, but of only marginal utility to the veteran. Most of the material presented is probably already well known to many hobbyists, though the evaluations might prove useful to some. Despite its title, the book is not complete. Due to the scope of its subject, the volume can only touch on many of the concepts in wargaming. The variety of games available and the rapidity with which they are published has already rendered the topical evaluations obsolete, though they do touch on some of the more important and readily available games in those categories. I do not mean to be harsh in these criticisms; the book is well written and interesting, but its usefulness to players who have been in the hobby for a while is going to be small. Still, many gamers may want to have it on their shelf as a reference work, or perhaps to marvel at wargaming's coming of age.



erably in quality and complexity. Any newcomer to gaming, especially one not entering via introduction by a friend who already plays, would probably appreciate a general overview of the hobby.

This book, assembled by the editors of *Consumer Guide* and Jon Freeman (a well-known writer on games of all sorts), offers such an introduction.

The book, a large-size volume, is divided into two parts. Part I, "An Introduction to Wargames," is just that. The section, comprising about a quarter of the book's text, is divided into five chapters. Chapter one, Can War be Fun? offers a brief history of wargaming both as a concept and an endeavor. The growth of Avalon Hill and SPI is spotlighted,

Good Ideas

The Nine Doctrines of Darkness
Retail price: \$5

Temple to Athena
Retail price: \$4.50

Mountain of Mystery
Retail price: \$4.50

All produced by
Dimension Six, Inc.

by Bill Fawcett

What is the value of an idea? This is the problem that confronts anyone trying to review an adventure module or any other of the numerous role-playing aids currently available. Basically, when you buy one of these adventures you are buying the use of another's ideas. There are many technical standards (art quality, clearness, etc.) that can be applied, but it is the strength of the idea(s) that must act as the ultimate standard.

Each of these three adventures is about the same length as most TSR modules. *The Nine Doctrines of Darkness* stands alone; the other two are part of a three-book set. The books are printed in typewriter-size print, which yields fewer words per page than typeset material, and they include numerous illustrations and maps. As a general rule the artwork is acceptable, but varies greatly in quality and craftsmanship. The covers are the most striking pictures in each volume, but some of the drawings in the *Temple* and *Mountain* books are more cartoons than anything else. The maps are clear and large enough to use easily, but their inclusion in the text itself leads to a lot of paging around during play. In *Doctrines* this has been helped somewhat by putting all of the maps in the center pages to facilitate their easy removal from the book.

These adventures are designed for use with all fantasy role-playing games and so have the advantages, and disadvantages, of being very general in spots. To make these works flexible enough for use with different systems, there have been a lot of minor details omitted that will have to be added before play begins. New monsters have been created for these adventures; the lizard men in *Temple* bear little resemblance to the AD&D version or the Newtlings of *Runequest*. Also, in *Doctrines* a class of "Weaponers" has been added that will need to be explained to players of most games. Generally, the adventures appear to be written in a manner that is most applicable to *AD&D* and most spells are drawn from that game.

Mountain of Mystery is the first of a three-part adventure. It involves a venture into the now-abandoned stronghold of a lost sect. The cavern complex is now, of course, inhabited by a diverse selection of monsters. The background for the mountain and each monster is given in some detail, which makes it easy to play the masters as if they had a personality and purpose. Of the three, this adventure has the least detail, and there are a

few inconsistencies. In one room you encounter a *kobold* who is guarding no less than a Manual of Puissant Skill At Arms. Still, there are some very good ideas, many of which are clues given in the form of some rather strained poetry. The mountain has several rooms which serve to teleport characters to the second adventure, *Temple to Athena*.

Temple of Athena can be played separately or as part of the series. A large amount of this module involves player characters interacting with various groups of monks and clerics. The module leaves plenty of room for interesting complications that the party can bring upon themselves by error or ignorance. Further, it offers an excellent place to take that evil character you rolled up and never had a place appropriate for. There are several outstanding traps and rooms here, and the adventure is worth the price just for these. A character record sheet is included that is of little use, since there is no copyright release on it.

The Nine Doctrines of Darkness is less of an adventure than a detailed landscape peopled with interesting characters. It begins

with a well written background and then spends most of the remaining space giving the history, abilities, and probable behavior of a wide variety of character types. One of the strengths of this adventure is that it is set up so that there is an equally sound rationale for good, neutral, or evil parties to participate. Several maps are included, of varying clarity and usefulness. More input from the DM is required from this adventure than with most other modules, but the area the text sketches allows for some fascinating possibilities.

If you buy these adventures, you will be buying ideas. Many of the ideas are very good and if you value such, either for use as a module or to include in your campaign, you should be pleased by the purchase. The printing, art, etc., varies greatly, and hopefully will be improved in later volumes. More illustrations of rooms, etc., would also have been an aid. If you are looking for a challenge for your regular players, these adventures may be a good buy. Hack-and-slash strategies will fail dismally, but the party that thinks its way through will succeed.



(From page 4)

ing. Sure, anyone failing their saving throw for disbelief takes damage as if the illusion had been real, but what about non-damaging situations? For instance, *Phantasmal* force is used to create a high-level Cleric to dispense some *Heals* around the party. If belief can cause wounds, then belief should be able to cure as well. Also, if your character can fall into and take damage from an illusionary pit, then your character should be able to cross an illusionary bridge. It is this ambiguity about *Phantasmal Force* that makes the spell sheer dynamite, not merely its damage-inflicting aspect.

I think that since it is belief that accounts for the damage done, then perhaps it is the unused four-fifths of the brain that is the power source. It could be argued then that anything possible through the use of psionics can be accomplished by phantasmal force. Of course, the hidden portion of the brain is most likely unused for one good reason or another, and drawing on it for anything might result in depleting the character's endurance prematurely. When causing damage to a monster or character it makes no difference, since most characters will rest when they're wounded (if they're able to) anyhow. However, illusionary healings and levitating over bridges that only exist in the mind would wear out one's brain power pretty quickly.

Hopefully, other players and DMs can provide more feedback on this subject. As I hope I've shown, *Phantasmal Force* is too vaguely described to be used in a game that appeals to as creative an audience as it was intended for.

David Wainwright
Hollis, N.Y.



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GIANTS IN THE EARTH

by Tom Moldvay

Contributions for the Giants in the Earth feature in *Dragon* magazine are now being accepted from readers. The following information will be of use to persons who intend to write one or more articles for consideration.

All contributions should be typed, double-spaced and in a legible fashion. For particular information on physical requirements of a manuscript, send a SASE to Dragon Publishing with a request for writers' guidelines.

To qualify for inclusion in Giants in the Earth, the contribution should depict a character from legendary sagas, classical literature, or modern fantasy literature. It should follow the traditional Giants in the Earth format (detailed below) as closely as possible. It should include the name of the author and a bibliography of the book(s) the character appeared in, or a traditional source material where the reader can find out more about the legends the character comes from. Lastly, the article should depict a character which can be useful in the playing of a *D&D®* or *AD&D™* campaign.

Individuals who write the contributions will receive full credit for authorship of the articles. Authors will also receive payment at the normal rate for written contributions, with the understanding that payment may be adjusted downward to account for a great amount of editing and/or revising which may be, necessary to bring the contribution into publishable condition.

Contributions should not be depictions of player characters, monsters, mythological creatures, or heroes from an individual's *D&D* or *AD&D* campaign. Characters who appear in sources to which *Dragon* readers have easy access will be preferred over those from more obscure sources.

A general format follows:

Author's name
Character's name

Level and Class

ALIGNMENT

HIT POINTS

ARMOR CLASS

NO. OF ATTACKS

DAMAGE/ATTACK

HIT BONUS

MOVE

PSIONIC ABILITY

PSIONIC STRENGTH (if any)

STRENGTH

INTELLIGENCE

WISDOM

DEXTERITY

CONSTITUTION

CHARISMA

The body of the contribution should include at least a physical description of the character, a short history of the character, any special abilities the character possesses, an outline of the character's personality, and tips for the DM which will help him/her run the character as a NPC. Whenever possible, instructions should give specific details rather than generalizations: For example, "the character does 3-30 points of damage," not "the character does a lot of damage."

The body of the article is followed by the author's credit, then the bibliography.

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Sage advice

Question: If a Magic-User casts a Shape Change spell and turns into a huge, ancient red dragon, will he have an 88-point breath weapon or will the breath weapon do his own hit points in damage?

Answer: The breath weapon will have strength equal to the hit points of the Magic-User. In the description of the Shape Change spell (*Players Handbook*, page 93), it is noted that a creature whose form is assumed by the spell caster will "have whatever hit points the magic-user has at the time of the *shape change*." — W. Niebling, J. Ward

* * *

Question: Why should Druids be able to wear leather armor, since it is made of the hides of the animals they worship?

Answer: Druids do not worship animals, they worship all aspects of nature. This includes the "survival of the fittest" process, whereby some animals are killed to provide food, protection, or some other benefit for another species. Since the Druid is as much a part of nature as the things which make up his environment, it is quite natural for a Druid to use the remains of a fellow creature for food, armor, or whatever. — J. Ward, W. Niebling

* * *

Question: Do you get experience points for a monster you are quested/geased to kill?

Answer: Yes. The awarding of experience points is in part designed to credit characters with actual experience -- that is, the proven ability to face a life-threatening or potentially harmful and overcome the obstacle it represents. Any time a character performs such an action, he/she is presumed to have learned from the experience, and receives experience points to signify that "betterment." Since a character under the influence of a Quest spell or a Geas spell is presumed to be conscious of his/her actions and capable of remembering events after they take place, it follows that experience points should be awarded to that character in normal fashion for any worthy deeds done while he/she was ensorcelled. — J. Ward, W. Niebling

* * *

Question: What happens when a cornered (as in a deep pit) undead creature is turned?

Answer: The act of turning undead (by a good Cleric) compels the victim to turn directly away from the Cleric and move as fast and as far away as possible for 3-12 rounds. When it is physically impossible for the creature to keep moving away, it will retreat to the most remote (from the Cleric) location in the area and continually face away from the Cleric and his/her holy symbol. — J. Ward, W. Niebling

* * *

Question: Do Clerics with 18 Strength qualify for exceptional Strength? What about multi-classed characters? Double-classed humans?

Answer: Only characters who are Fighters or have the Fighter class as one of their classes can qualify for an exceptional strength rating. Furthermore, several races and genders of races are by their nature unable to achieve an 18 Strength, and

thus do not qualify for the exceptional rating even if they are Fighters. These types include all females except for humans and half-orcs, plus male halflings. — J. Ward, W. Niebling

* * *

Question: Does a Luck Blade sword give a +1 "to hit" in combat?

Answer: No, it only gives +1 to saving throws.

* * *

Question: What would happen if you placed a full Bag of Holding into an empty Bag of Holding? I want to be able to carry as much treasure and magic as I can without encumbering myself. Do you think this is a good idea?

Answer: This is an interesting idea, and one which I discussed with the TSR Hobbies, Inc. Design Dept. We have all agreed that if a full *Bag of Holding* is placed in an empty one, only one more small (ring-sized) item could also be placed in the second bag. Since all *Bags of Holding* are made by the same sort of magic, they do not work in their normal fashion with respect to other bags. So, once a full bag is placed in an empty one, the second one becomes full also, except for the single, small extra item that may be fit inside it. — J. Wells

* * *

Question: It states in the Monster Manual (under Quasit) that Clerics can have familiars. How do Clerics go about obtaining these familiars, and what is available?

Answer: The description under Quasit in the *Monster Manual* does not imply that *all* Clerics can have familiars; it merely says that the Quasit is a particular creature which may serve as a familiar for a Cleric of chaotic evil alignment. The question of whether or not any other sort of Cleric can have a familiar, or precisely which creatures might be able to serve in this capacity, is left to the DM. If a DM rules that Clerics may be entitled to have familiars, it is suggested that they only be granted by a Cleric's deity to a worshipper who has remained faithful to that deity for a long, long time, and as reverently as possible has fulfilled the requests and requirements of that religion.

* * *

Question: Do Paladins and Rangers have to have special gods to pray to in order to obtain their spells? Do their gods have to be patron gods of Paladins and Rangers?

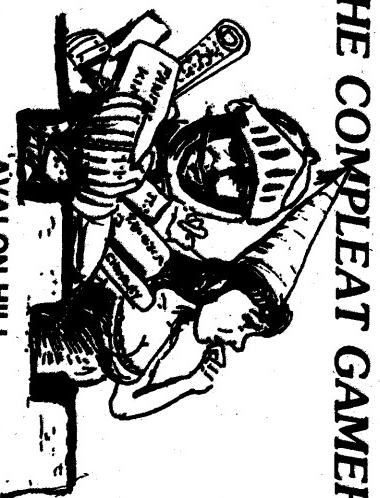
Answer: No. The only absolute restriction on the selection of a deity by a Paladin or Ranger is based on alignment -that is, the character's god obviously cannot be of an evil nature. While a Paladin could be expected to only pay homage to a lawful good deity, in general it would be possible for a Ranger (for example) of neutral good alignment to pray to a chaotic good deity. — J. Wells

* * *

Question: What does "vorpal" mean?

Answer: It comes from the nonsense phrase, "and the vorpal blade went snickersnack," written by Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland*. In the *D&D®* and *AD&D™* rules, it is a word used to describe an extremely sharp (magical) sword or blade. — J. Ward, W. Niebling

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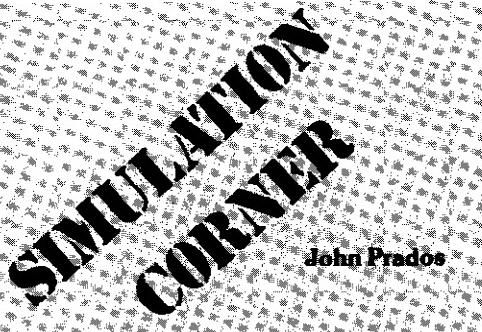
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The 1980 Wargame Year

As 1980 passes into history, it is time to take a broad look at the game industry's offerings this past year. It has been a year of a few notable design advances, some surprises, and much disappointment. The advances will be discussed later in this article. The disappointment is because little of what appeared in 1980 constitutes really new, good, playable games.

As for the surprises, the first of these is a matter of game size. In 1979, looking toward 1980, it seemed that the small "micro" game would be the major trend in the hobby. This boded well for holding down the cost of games in an inflationary economy and also offered the possibility of playing interesting games within a manageable amount of time. Over the first half of 1980 a number of such "micros" appeared. Later, however, the trend appears to have reversed itself. There are a surprising number of very large and/or very complex games that came out this year. Among them are SPI's *NATO Division Commander* and its *Campaign for North Africa*; Phoenix Games' *Streets of Stalingrad*; Operational Studies Group's *Air Cobra*; and Avalon Hill's *Longest Day*. Most of these designs were "monster" games with multiple maps and thousands of counters, despite the earlier conclusion within the industry that the large games had been rather overdone. Granted that some of the titles were holdovers from the earlier "monster" age—with *North Africa* in development for three years, *NATO Division Commander* for two and *Longest Day* for two—the surprise is still that the games were released at all.

Perhaps the reason may be found in the disappointment with the "micro" titles. The promising start of these small games has been wasted through indifferent playtesting and development. For example, Task Force Games' *Prochorovka* was a novel approach to a classic battle, Kursk on the Russian front, in which players could battle it out tactically in the climactic encounter between SS Panzer forces and Soviet reserve tank armies. But the flavor of the battle was destroyed by poor terrain analysis and indifferent order of battle research. Civil War "micros" like SPI's *Pea Ridge* were hampered by the resort to a mind-bending game system (TSS) combined with insufficient attention to the intelligibility of game

rules. Variants on problems like these, along with the healthy increase of "micro" titles produced on science-fiction topics, made for slim pickings in good "micro" wargames.

Another surprise of 1980 is topical. There has been a tremendous concentration upon the Civil War as a subject area, after several years of claims that the Civil War had effectively been "gamed out." Instead, 1980 produced quite a few new titles in this area. Among them an admittedly incomplete list would include SPI's *Pea Ridge* and *Drive on Washington*, the most interesting of four released at Origins '80. There has also been OSG's *Devil's Den*, an interesting tactical study of a portion of Gettysburg. Simulations Canada produced *Lee at the Crossroads*, an operational-level design covering all of Gettysburg. Also released in 1980 was yet another "monster" treatment from SPI, *Bloody April*, dealing with the battle of Shiloh and using the TSS system. Only Avalon Hill seems not to have published a Civil War design in 1980.

A survey by publishing houses yields a few interesting observations. Let's start with Avalon Hill since it's just been mentioned. AH brought forward only a few historical games. The first was Mark McLaughlin's *War and Peace*, developed by Frank Davis, an attempt to create a strategic Napoleonic game. Then there was Randy Reed's *The Longest Day*, the "monster" Normandy game that has already been mentioned. An American edition of an Australian game, Jedko's *Fortress Europa*, developed by Alan Moon, was released at Origins '80. The Christmas release was the very attractive *Air Force* re-issue masterminded by Kevin Zucker, a game acquired by Avalon Hill when it bought out the Battleline Games historical titles in 1979.

Offerings from Simulations Publications are more numerous than AH's, but fewer than SPI produced the preceding year. Most interesting is probably *Tito*, a game of guerrilla warfare in Yugoslavia during World War II that was designed by Dick Rustin, who writes for the *Wall Street Journal*. This was an S&T issue game and thus received wide circulation. Rustin's other SPI game, the "micro" called *Lenigrad*, was much less successful with definite problems of play balance that favor

the Soviet player. The Civil War "micros" have already been discussed, while another World War II "micro" was Jim Dunnigan's *Bulge*, a remake on a topic SPI has done many times before. Dunnigan's *NATO Division Commander* is ambitious and probably too ponderous for most players. Eric Goldberg's *Kursk* is also ambitious and presents some interesting command and control features although its combat system is not so satisfactory. Shifting to earlier times, SPI also released *Empires of the Middle Ages*, a fun strategic game on the formation of the nation states in Europe. Although this represents a fair number of titles, much of SPI's design and development effort in 1980 was devoted to the production of science-fiction and role-playing games, of which the most notable are *Dragonquest* and *Dallas*, a take-off on the popular television series. Because of problems in SPI's R&D department and the continued interest in science fiction and fantasy, it is probable that 1981 historical releases will maintain roughly this pace.

Game Designers Workshop, like SPI, has been overwhelmingly attracted to science fiction and fantasy, so much so that Marc Miller, for example, now regards himself as exclusively a sci-fi/fantasy designer. GDW's 1980 year included the long-awaited *Marita-Merkur* addition to the *Europa* series. There was also a Napoleonic battle game on *Eylau* basically patterned on the earlier GDW 1815 treatment of Waterloo, and a Frederickian "micro" battle game, *Prague*, that used the successful *Lobositz* system but with less effect. The Workshop has also continued to add new items to its line of System 7 Napoleonics with Cardboard counters that model units and colors of various Napoleonic armies. The System 7 line actually won an award at Origins '80 for excellence in miniature figures. GDW has supported the line with miniature rules for both this period and, in tandem with microarmor figures, for modern armored warfare. It is currently rumored that Frank Chadwick of GDW is at work on another *Europa* addition, a game on the hypothetical German invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1988.

Operational Studies Group of New York continued through 1980 its strong commitment to both Napoleonics and the Civil War. In *Napoleon* & OSG produced a "micro"

game called *Arcola* on one of Bonaparte's campaigns in northern Italy. *Arcola* was a small segment of a much larger OSG release, *Bonaparte in Italy*, which had three maps and covered the Italian campaigns in great detail. Both games were designed by Kevin Zucker before he moved to Baltimore to work for Avalon Hill. In the Civil War area OSG also returned to Lenny Milman, who had done the "micro" *20th Maine*, which dealt with a portion of the Devil's Den fighting at Gettysburg, to expand that into a full treatment of this flank at Gettysburg. Thus the origin of a design that has already been mentioned. Probably the most interesting OSG game in 1980 was the *Air Cobra* treatment of modern tactical warfare. Here designer Tony Merridy and developer Dave Collins created a comprehensive view of the effects of missiles on ground fighting. *Air Cobra* has playability problems in that real time is no match for game time that stretches out into infinity but, for the first time, missiles actually operate as missiles in a combat environment. The game has been called "a Jane's of modern tactical weapons" by one reviewer. With this said on the wargames, it should also be noted that OSG next intends to release several "adventure" games of the same general type as its successful *Robin Hood* design of 1980.

Steven Newberg of Simulations Canada also brought out a few good titles last year. His *Lee at the Crossroads* has been

noted above. In addition, Newberg's World War II naval tactical trilogy was completed in 1980 with the appearance of *Kriegsmarine*, which shares a system, scale, and data base with the two earlier designs and covers combat in the Atlantic and Mediterranean much as the earlier games did for the Pacific and for tactical antisubmarine warfare. Simulations Canada has maintained a strong line and, most interesting from a gamer's standpoint, offers its products at somewhat lower prices than comparable designs from other companies. Despite this litany of newly available wargames, the field has not been without problems in 1980. Events at SPI have been covered in a previous *Simulation Comer*. There are recurrent rumors that Task Force Games is going out of business. The same is true of Phoenix Games, which invested a very great deal in its massive Dana Lombardy-John Hill design *Streets of Stalingrad*, even while Hill was doing another version of the same game for SPI. Production and manpower problems have bedeviled West End Games, which almost failed to release any games at all in 1980. A long, drawn-out design and development

effort has also delayed the appearance of new material from People's War Games of California. A bright spot on the horizon among the smaller companies has been the growth and increased quality of the British publication *The Wargamer*, published by World Wide Wargamers. The 1980 games in this magazine have included very good designs on World War I air combat and on the first Battle of Bull Run.

So much for 1980. Gamers have now to look forward to what 1981 may bring. Hopefully, the trend toward fewer titles will result in better development work. Hopefully, prices can be kept down. Hopefully also the companies will put their houses together. But there is still the recurrent question of whether every topic has been "gamed out." My answer would be no. What is really needed is for designers to exercise more imagination in their selection of topics and research on relevant data. The restriction to secondary sources, more than anything else, has limited the choice of topics in the past. We can do better than that. It is not computers that are the wave of the future in board wargaming, but rather imagination itself. Perhaps 1981 will bring more of that.

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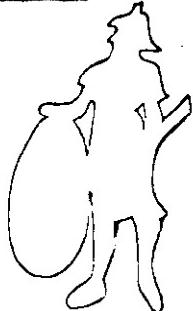
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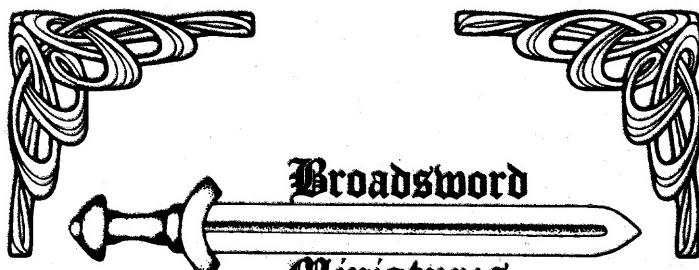
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STELLAR CON VI, Feb. 27-Mar. 1 — Sponsored by the Science Fiction Fantasy Federation, to be held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Featuring games, lectures, exhibits, costume contest. For more information, contact David Allen, Box 4-EUC, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro NC 27412.

OWLCON II, March 6-8 — Sponsored by the Rice Program Council, to be held at Rice University, Houston, Tex., in the Rice Memorial Center and surrounding buildings. Science fiction, fantasy, and other wargaming events. For more information, send SASE to OwlCon II, Rice Program Council, Box 1892, Houston TX 77001.

MARCON 16, March 13-15 — A science fiction convention to be held at the Columbus Hilton Inn, 3110 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, Ohio. Guest of Honor Andrew Offutt. Registration \$10 until Jan. 1. For more information, contact Mark Evans, P.O. Box 2583, Columbus OH 43216, or phone 614-497-9953.

SILICON, March 14-15 — A science fiction and fantasy convention at the Le Baron Hotel, San Jose, Calif. Costume show & contest, art show & sale, 24-hour film festival plus sf-f gaming events. \$10 membership available from SiliCon, 478 W. Hamilton #147, Campbell CA 95008.

SIMCON III, March 20-21 — Sonsored by the University of Rochester Simulation Gaming Association, to be held at the Math Science Building on the University of Rochester river campus. Gaming of all types. Registration \$2 before March 1, \$3 thereafter. For more information, contact SIMCON 111, P.O. Box 5142, Rochester NY 14627.

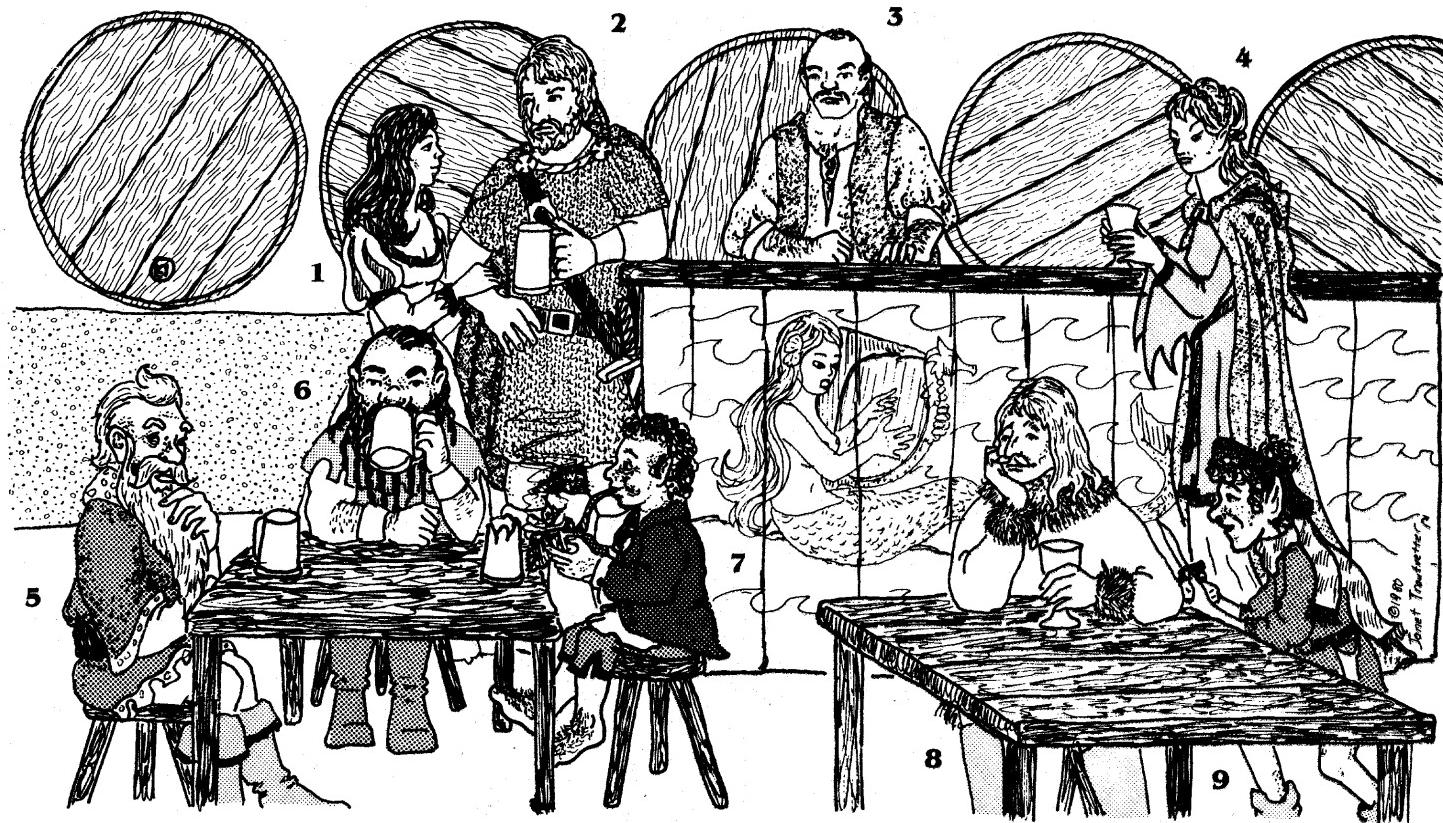
SPRING REVEL, March 28-29 — A TSR Hobbies, inc. mini-convention at the American Legion Hall, 735 Henry St., Lake Geneva WI. \$1.25 per day, \$2.00 for both days. For more information contact Ralph "Skip" Williams, TSR Hobbies inc. POB 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. (414) 248-9099.

CWA'S SPRING GAME FEST, April 3-5 --The first springtime convention to be staged by the Chicago Wargamers Association. To be held at the College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Ill. More than 100 events are scheduled, including big AD&D and Traveller tournaments, miniatures, auctions, seminars and exhibitors. Pre-registration information available from Chicago Wargamers Association, 3605 Bobolink Lane, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008.

UNHSGC SPRING GAMING FESTIVAL, April 4-5 — Sponsored by the University of New Hampshire Simulation Games Club. A two-day mini-con featuring miniatures battles, board games, and role-playing adventures. Contact R. Bradford Chase, UNH Simulation Games Club, Memorial Union Building, University of New Hampshire, Durham NH 03824, for more information.

GRIMCON III, May 22-25 — To be held at the Oakland Hyatt House, 455 Hegenberger Road, Oakland CA 94612. Fantasy and science fiction gaming, dealers, demonstrations, and the other usual features. For more information, contact Grimcon, P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley CA 94704.

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The Sorcerer's Jewel

(From page 9)

"He still intends to go?" asked Zereth.

"He still intends to go," the halfling answered. "His uncle has given him a set of powerful clerical charms to carry."

Zereth looked doubtful.

"Really, I have seen myself," Boinger assured him. "A leather pouch of clerical scrolls, and an amulet of protection the lad wears around his neck."

"How powerful does he say the scrolls will be?"

Boinger shrugged. "Not very, but he has a dozen of them in the pouch, and it sounds like clerical protection is what he will need most."

"Good," said Zereth, getting out the parchment and spreading it upon the scarred tabletop. "Have you seen where this tunnel goes? The well entrance looks innocent enough, but if you superimpose a map of the town . . ." he sketched with a piece of charcoal, "the tunnel goes under Witch's Hill, where the old Suloise city is supposed to be buried."

Boinger leaned over the drawing. Maps had fascinated him ever since, as a lad, he had been shown a representation of the known world and declared that someday he would explore the unknown edges of it.

"So the old Mage's tomb might well be there?" he asked.

"It might," said Zereth, throwing himself back on the bed, "but it may well be anywhere on the map."

"Watch this," said the halfling. He tossed the dagger. Clunk! It landed upright in the middle of the parchment. Boinger leaned over to look.

"Dead center," he said, "right where the phony ghost-lady says it will be."

* * * *

The stairs were irregular, worn blocks of stone. The eternal damp of the well kept them wet and slippery. The halfling took each step slowly, with great care. Under his bare toes he could feel the squishiness of some kind of darkness-growing lichens. He wished he dared put his boots, now precariously perched atop his haversack, back on his feet, but he needed every advantage he could get on the slimy descent—burdened as he was with chainmail coat, helmet, short sword and buckler, in addition to the bandolier of daggers he habitually wore across his chest, overbalanced by the backpack with the round shield strapped to it, and holding a sputtering, smoking torch in his left hand. He lowered himself over each step by holding on with his right hand while his toes sought the step below.

"Mithra preserve us," he whispered, "how deep does it go?" Tarkan was below him on the stairs, also descending backwards, despite his size, being as cautious of the footing as Boinger himself. The short, burly mercenary was below them, with the other torch, and Zereth led the descent. A

long loop of the rope that bound them all together separated the dark elf from the rest of the party, allowing him to precede them far enough to use his darkness-piercing ultravision to some extent.

"The map says only five hundred cubits," Tarkan replied.

"Cubits?" Boinger said. "How long be a cubit, sire?"

"As long as your arm—as long as a man's arm," Tarkan told him, remembering that he addressed a halfling.

"Quiet up there." The elf's voice sounded irritated, echoing hollowly from the pitch black depths.

"Naytheless," Boinger whispered, "we've come twice so far. We'll be near the nethermost gates of Hell ere we know it."



Roslof

The young human did not reply. Holding his torch away from the slimy, smelly walls, Boinger could see him toiling downward, his long blond hair escaped from the back of his helmet and coiling over his shoulders.

Interminable, spiraling, wet steps descended; the round blue dot of the sky eventually vanished. Perhaps the shaft twisted sideways? The little halfling was gasping with fatigue and drenched with sweat when he finally got to the bottom.

The sputtering torches showed a natural cavern with a pool of dark water at its center, remnants of an old well. Three passages leading north, south and east were blocked with thick black oaken doors hang-

ing on iron hinges set into the rock. Over their heads Boinger sensed the immense thickness of earth and stone pressing down upon their tiny glow of yellow torchlight, tons and tons of darkness looming over them. He shook himself and dismissed the thoughts with an effort of will, suspecting the lingering claustrophobia, so uncharacteristic of his usual mood, to be the residual effect of some old fear spell clinging to the well bottom.

Scarcely had the halfling sunk down on his haunches to rest than Zereth's hand jerked him back to his feet. Soundlessly the black elf, drawn sword in hand, placed the members of the party facing the doors, their backs to the stone steps which they had just descended. With a gesture he then signaled Boinger, using the silent sign language the two adventurers had developed for just such occasions: "Check each door."

Check the door, check the door, complained the halfling mentally to himself, still struggling with the ill humor the place engendered, how many hundred doors have I checked? The price of noiseless feet and keen ears. He tiptoed from panel to panel, listening, touching, smelling. The dirt was undisturbed, or so it seemed. The silence was unbroken save for the breathing of the two humans. Boinger shook his head, signaled to Zereth: "Nothing. Perhaps the undead?" The little thief's hand crept to the leather sack at his belt, pulled out the tiny silver cross on its thong and slipped it quickly over his head.

The gesture was not lost on the mercenary warrior, Gulf, who promptly gestured fervently and mouthed a soundless prayer. Behind them, Tarkan and Zereth consulted over the map, then chose to approach the north door. The elf tried pressing on the panel, with no result. While precious minutes crept by, he searched the worn wood for a latch. Finally, he stepped back and gestured, whispered a spell. A flicker of blue appeared at the door edge, spread like flame along the lintel, surrounded the door frame a moment and then went out.

"Wizard locked," said Zereth aloud.

Tarkan reached into the leather pouch he carried, produced the first scroll and handed it over to the elf. Zereth read off the spell. The door opened inward, toward the passage beyond, with a great creaking and groaning of its hinges. The corridor was filled with blackness and the aura of fear grew stronger. Uneasily, Zereth peered into it with his ultravision, signaled the group to follow him, and entered.

More dark and dripping stone walls, thought Boinger. The torches flickered; a cold breeze blew down the passage toward them, cold but musty, moldy, with no hint of fresh air about it.

Boinger had decided that all this was not too bad when abruptly the torches blew out. He found the flint and steel in his belt pouch but he was unsuccessful in getting the pitch-soaked wood and rags to relight. It

seemed that every time a flame sprang up a gust of wind would blow it out. From the steady stream of curses coming from up ahead, he knew Gulf was having as little success as himself.

"The light spell!" gasped Tarkan. "Zereth, where are you?"

"Here." The only one of the party who could see in the dark, the elf broke the seal and mumbled the magic words. The spell, when it took effect, gave a pale white, feeble glow which Zereth had cast upon the point of Tarkan's short spear. With this dim illumination they resumed their journey. Boinger carefully pushed the extinguished torch back into the bundle strapped to the side of his haversack.

Dark, gloomy, damp corridors led them deeper into the earth. The little halfling's thoughts turned grim. Perhaps this entire adventure was ill-fated from that first seance. What were they doing, halfling and elf, chasing after the handsome human lordling's magic gem—some gift for his pretty mistress, most likely. You'd think the lady would be satisfied with her lover's blond hair and blue eyes and broad shoulders. What did she need magic gems for anyway? Magic gems presumably guarded by a dead man . . . Boinger had a healthy dislike for the human dead—and human undead, so often malignant, evil, and difficult to destroy.

The corridor led straight on, the light spell providing unwavering though dim illumination. Zereth still strode in front, his steps silent, enchanted sword blade ready in his hand. Perhaps, Boinger thought, this is still better than working on the farm—mowing, milking, plowing—though a bit of sunlight would be most welcome here in the dark.

It was shadows that attacked, striking without warning. The dark moving figures appeared briefly on the wall to either side of Tarkan, the light bearer. The man cried out, as did Gulf the mercenary. Boinger saw the flickering dark shapes on either side of him, wavering, indistinct upon the stone walls. He drew his enchanted dagger, stabbing to either side in blind defense. He felt the chill as the weapon hit one of the insubstantial figures.

"Forward!" shouted Zereth. "Keep moving down the corridor, quick!"

But Tarkan hesitated. Boinger pushed at him with his free hand, still striking with his dagger at the creatures that circled the man.

"So cold, so weak," gasped Tarkan.

"Keep moving, light ahead," urged Zereth.

"Up on your feet," whispered Boinger. "Keep moving, more of them behind." This was a lie, but the enfeebled human seemed to be motivated only by his fear, and feeding that fear seemed the only way to get him to move.

The light revealed the closest shadows—ungainly, inhuman in shape, as they



flickered along the walls. Boinger felt the chill as one of the things struck at him and barely missed. Tarkan stumbled forward. Boinger heard the clash of the elf's broadsword against the wails as they fought their way, step by step, down the corridor. The two humans were helpless before the evil onslaught, having no weapons of use save the dim light. Only the magical blades of the elf and the halfling made any impression upon the insubstantial monsters.

The "light" that Zereth drew them toward brought little reassurance to the embattled halfling. It was a patch of green glow, as spooky in appearance as the shadow-infested corridor. As they drew closer, Boinger saw that it was a doorway. The shadows seemed to hang back as the group approached the glow, and so, without preliminaries, they launched themselves into the room.

The light, Boinger saw, came from a yellowish-green fungus that clung to the dark stone walls and hung in obscene festoons from the low ceiling. The humans had to stoop to avoid brushing against the stuff.

The shadows' attack seemed to stop at the doorway, however, and the adventurers paused to regain their composure. Tarkan, still holding the glowing spear in both hands, sank to his knees.

"Weak, so weak," he gasped.

Zereth bent over him, rummaged in the scroll sack. "Where's the healing spell? Ah, here . . ." He snapped it open, read the few lines over the young man's head and dropped the now-blank roll of parchment on the black stone floor. The halfling remained crouched, dagger at the ready, facing the portal through which they had just come. There was no door to shut; he doubted a mere wooden panel would stop the insubstantial phantoms anyway.

Zereth circled the room while the others caught their breath. It was small and had only one other portal, directly opposite the doorway through which they had entered. Shattered, rotting wood still attached to iron hinges on this door did not obstruct the way, but the darkness beyond the entryway seemed impenetrable.

"Better?" asked the dark elf, touching Tarkan on the shoulder. "Check the map, I think this must be an antechamber of the temple itself." After a moment's consultation they decided this was so.

"There ought to be another door," said Zereth, gazing thoughtfully at the glowing fungi on the west wall. "I am, however, reluctant to search that stuff with my bare hands. Gulf, the oil."

The mercenary stood up and unstrapped two of the leather flasks that hung from his left shoulder. Zereth took one and began squirting its contents upon the stones. Boinger saw the grey stone, still covered with phosphorescent patches, ripple up the wall, saw the top of the wall detach like a pouting lower lip, then curl down . . .

"Watch out!" he shouted, jumping back. Zereth moved away like a lightning bolt as the eight-foot-high oblong mass fell just to his left. In a moment, it had begun to flow across the floor toward Tarkan, who had not yet regained his feet.

Now all was confusion. Zereth dropped the oil skin and drew his broadsword, the steel flashing in the magic light. Gulf the hired warrior, being farthest from the monster, struck flint and steel to one of the snuffed-out torches. Boinger and Tarkan moved in opposite directions; the little halfling thief was fast, but the young human lordling was still drained by shadow-touch. The horrid grey ooze wrapped around the man's foot like a stream of lava, and the victim cried out as the acid-covered flesh ate through his boot and into his skin.

Gulf tossed the smoldering torch. Don't . . . "Boinger began, but too late. The oil on the monster ignited. Crackling, sooty orange flame leapt up and began sputtering over the edges of the moving grey blob. The monster showed no response. Zereth's sword swung in an arc, clanged against the stone floor as it sliced through the animated pool of ooze. Tarkan, his foot free but still covered with grey stuff, danced back out of danger and began hacking off the rest of his boot with his sword edge.

The ooze turned and thrust grey pseudopodia toward the elf. Zereth eluded the thing. The oil blazed merrily, impotent against the horrid thing. The apparently mindless creature tried to force the elf and man back against the wall from which it had sprung.

"Blades, blades!" cried Zereth, striking again and again. Boinger and Gulf drew and slashed, stashed and cut until the thin blob lay motionless before them on the dark flagstones, the oil burnt out, the room thick with smoke.

"Sooner out of here the better," said Zereth, coughing. He sheathed his sword and ran his fingers over the now-bare stones of the wail. Within seconds he had located the hidden catch and a panel of stone swung back, revealing another room, again lit by the feeble luminescent fungi, draped with long streamers of fine, lace-like cobweb.

Cautiously they entered, Tarkan now limping in the rear. Soundlessly, Zereth led the way, pointing out to the others the faint tracks of other feet in the soft grey dust before them. Tracks in or tracks out? Boinger wondered. He did not wonder long.

The low mounds in the dust were too, too easy to identify. There were six of them, and as Zereth gently moved the dust aside with his soft leather boots, they all could see the darkened gleam of rusted mail, the glint of bone.

Boinger turned slowly, surveying the room. The soft white glow of the light spell did not reach the farther walls, only the one behind with its open door. Above, the ceiling arched upward into a dome, the apex

black and impenetrable—threatening. Before, and on either hand, was more darkness.

The thief knelt, his eyes still straining to detect some movement, some sign of danger. His left hand ran expert, agile fingers through the dust, finding and discarding old belt buckles, chain links, studs, and detecting and pocketing the pitiful few coins these mortal shapes still kept in their possession.

"Gor!" cursed the taciturn mercenary. "What could 'ave got 'em?"

"Another party, do you think, Boinger?" whispered Zereth, his eyes searching the encircling darkness.

"Nay," answered the little thief, quite practical. "They've not been looted. Another group of adventurers would have taken their gold and jewels, if not their weapons." He was busy making this opinion a reality.

"These poor fellows are still armed, Zereth," Boinger whispered again, pulling a shining, rustless black weapon from between skeletal fingers. "This looks quite magical . . ."

"Hush!" The elf crept forward on silent boots, moving in a fighter's crouch, to the edge of the pale pool of light. His gaze dropped to the dust at his feet. "Ah!" he cried and peered again into the dark. He hastened back.

"Tracks," he said. "They were pursued. Quickly, Tarkan, the protection scroll. Do you have it?" in the distant darkness, at the far end of the room, there arose a creaking noise, as if old dry wooden hinges had been disturbed. The magical light seemed to flicker and a chill struck the halfling, making him shudder.

"Here." Tarkan's voice was barely audible.

"Read it, quickly," directed Zereth. "You others, hold his hands."

Tarkan's fingers were wet with sweat, despite the cold. The ominous creaking came again as Tarkan recited the enchanted words.

Now the miraculous light had dimmed to a faint glow and the chill of the air had increased. Boinger felt the cold and darkness gather over his head like great folding bat wings. The creaking sound was rhythmic now, creak-creak, pause, creak-creak. It was, he realized, the sound of someone, someone with very old joints, creeping toward them, probably on tiptoe. As the four adventurers crouched in the dust of their predecessors, still, unknowing, holding hands, the sound of that stealthy approach drew closer in the muffling dark.

Boinger felt the hair on the back of his neck prickle and pull as it stood straight up around the edge of his helmet. In front of him loomed a tail, slender, shadowy figure. The head seemed cowled, but where the eyes might be, two tiny green flames danced and flickered. The awful creaking came again. The figure swayed and stepped nearer.

They all rose to their feet. Boinger's teeth were chattering in his head. Gulf gave an awful cry, a wail of anguish, seemingly from the very bottom of his soul. His sword fell clattering into the dust—he turned and ran. In the darkness they could hear his scream continue, interrupted by thuds as he ran into the stone walls in the dark. His cries of terror dwindled into silence.

"The holy water!" Zereth snapped. He stepped forward, sword pointed at the terrible apparition. Closer it came, an aura of cold and fear preceding it like a wall of ice. His teeth still clicking, Boinger fumbled at his belt for the vials.

Tarkan lifted the glowing spear and held it forward. "His neck!" the young human gasped. "He's wearing the stone around his neck!"

Boinger could see the thing more clearly now, and it did nothing for his composure. The head and raised hands were skeletal, but the figure was swathed in a purple robe, trimmed with grey fur, and a fold of this had been drawn over the dome of the skull like a hood. Beneath, in each eye socket, the green flames flickered with evil.

"Back, back, foul creature of the pit!" cursed Zereth, thrusting with his sword. The point of the magic weapon flashed blue and was turned aside. Undaunted, the heroic elf tried a roundhouse swing, using both hands, and saw his blade tear into the rotting robes. Foul dust spewed forth.

A skeletal hand gestured; iridescence swirled before their eyes but then disappeared. The talisman around Tarkan's neck now glowed bright blue. The human gave a cry of triumph and thrust at the horrid creature with his glowing spear.

"Boinger, get him back," cried the dark elf. The halfling had cautiously circled out of the direct path of the evil thing. He held his magic dagger ready to throw in one hand, again felt in his belt pouch for the vials.

Tarkan's spear had no effect, but the man advanced and thrust again. Again the creature gestured magically. Suddenly darkness and silence settled over Boinger like he was dunked into a lake of ink. He was momentarily blind and deaf; then his vision cleared and he could see the glow of the amulet on Tarkan's breast. It was so bright it lit up the man's face, now grinning with triumph.

"Harmless!" the human was shouting as Boinger's ears began to function again. "Lord of evil, give me the gem . . ." The skeletal arms seemed to glide towards Tarkan's face. Boinger leaped toward them, his enchanted dagger clashing against the concealed bones of that terrible left arm.

"Oh, no you don't" Boinger cried. The fearsome flame-lit eye sockets turned to regard him. A sudden awful doubt seized the halfling's mind: that this undead creature was far too powerful for them, any of

them. He began to wish he had not jumped quite so quickly to the young human's defense.

Soundless save for the creaking of its bony joints, the skeletal figure lurched forward and a grisly white hand flashed out at the halfling, seized him by the neck.

Boinger cried out as the skeletal hand lifted him off the floor. Awful, numbing cold flooded his chest at the fearsome touch of the lich.

"Tarkan, get back," yelled Zereth. "You've naught to strike him with." The dark elf thrust again with his magical blade; again the dust burst forth from beneath those rotting robes.

"Nay, he wears the stone!" called Tarkan. Now, indeed, Boinger could see the skeletal face more clearly, and around the thin neck was looped a chain. Suspended on it, down over the purple robe, there dangled a long-faceted yellow gem. It swung to and fro as that powerful, chilling hand raised him up. Boinger could hear his friend Zereth cursing and slashing away, but it seemed all to be happening at a great distance. Almost swooning with weakness and cold, he watched those devil flames dancing in the eye pits as the dreadful skull opened its jaw. To his horror he saw that the lower canine teeth of the thing had grown and curled like the fangs of a snake.

Suddenly, between them—undead monster and terrified halfling—there was

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thrust the bulk of the blond, armored human. "The stone!" he cried again, clutching it with both hands.

The lich struck at the young man with his free hand, and Tarkan cried out in pain and fear. The icy grip loosed on the halfling, and, though Boinger did not fall, he felt himself shaken back to his senses. He bit the cork on the crystal vial he held in his left hand and cast the clear fluid into those dreadful eye sockets. At the same time he felt the lich stagger under another blow as Zereth, undaunted, circled to his enemy's rear.

The monster cast the luckless human from him and Tarkan fell sprawling into the dust. Boinger had released the stopper of the second vial in his left hand in that moment, and now poured its contents into the gaping skeletal mouth. A high-pitched scream split the halfling's eardrums, and he fell as his attacker collapsed. He rolled and jumped to his feet, dropping the empty vials and bringing his dagger to the ready.

But the thing didn't move and, as Boinger approached cautiously, Zereth prodded it with swordpoint.

"It's done for," the elf said, glancing around the darkened room. "I hope there aren't any more. How are you?"

"Better," said the little thief. "That awful cold is gone. What happened to the man?"

"Let's see," Zereth knelt at Tarkan's side. "Still breathing, but unconscious. We'll have to carry him out."

"Mithra's Mother," swore Boinger, whose spirits had begun to improve. "Carry him? Can't you heal him so's he'll wake up?"

"Only one scroll of each spell, remember?" said Zereth, pulling the leather case off the recumbent youth. "He's still holding the gem."

"Let him hold it," said Boinger decisively. "We'll took around for something else."

Zereth was looking through the scrolls. "There's a protection from cold here," he said, "but he's already frozen; I don't think it would do any good. We might read it over you."

"Do you think there are any more of those things around?" asked Boinger.

"I don't hear anything or sense anything, do you?" the elf answered. Indeed, the darkened room seemed empty and nonthreatening.

"Let's risk a quick search," said Boinger, "Never mind the spell just now."

"I didn't think I'd get you out of here without searching the room," Zereth replied.

* * * *

It was a small but rich yield. A great carved ivory chair, too big to carry out ("For later," Boinger said); a nasty-looking black book, opened with great care, which turned out to have blank pages ("Old grimoire," Zereth guessed); a set of gold plates and a cup, set with emeralds; and two scrolls, sealed in ivory cylinders.

"What's to be done with the young man?" Boinger asked, as he carefully stowed each of the smaller items in his haversack. "We'll never be able to carry him, unless we strip off his armor. Oh, why didn't we think to bring a mule?"

"Down the well?" Zereth asked.

"The well!" Boinger cried. "We'll never get him up the well! What's to be done?"

"Wait at the bottom until he's recovered enough to climb out on his own," said the elf, practically.

"But that will take days!" the halfling protested. He went to the unconscious human and began gently removing his chainmail. "And Mithra knows what will be coming down these other corridors. Why don't you look at those scrolls?"

"I have," said Zereth. "There are eight left, but they're of little use to us now: purify food, create water, detect magic . . ."

"No, I mean the ones Old Bony had under his chair."

"Risky," said the elf. "Still, with the shadows and all . . ." He broke the seal on the first cylinder while Boinger stood next to him, holding the glowing spear. The elf blew the dust off the ancient parchment and carefully unrolled the edge of the magical device. In a moment he chuckled.

"This is it," he said. "Just what we need." In a moment there was a faintly glowing blue disc, three feet in diameter, floating in the air before him. "Quick, shove Tarkan onto that, it'll carry him for us," he said.

They started out of the room, the comatose human sprawled across the floating disc, onto which Boinger promptly also loaded his pack. "Wait," he said.

Zereth paused. "How about the chair?" the halfling asked. "We could put it over the top of him."

"Don't be greedy," the elf replied, and started for the door, commanding the disc to follow.

"It might actually protect him," Boinger persisted.

"Don't argue," the elf replied. "I don't know how long this thing will last."

"Will it go up the well?"

"I don't see why not, if I tell it to follow me."

* * * *

Tarkan had been installed in the big bed in the adventurers' room at the Green Dragon. Pale and chill from a ride in the moonlight over the back of a mule (the disc had winked out at the top of the well), he looked like a corpse. Zereth and Boinger enlisted the aid of a few of the more sober patrons of the common room to carry him upstairs and then sent for a cleric.

In another hour, after the clerical visit, the patient was speaking again. Boinger descended to the lower room to talk to the hangers-on and refresh himself. Zereth threw his cloak on the floor and was instantly asleep.

It was close to dawn. None of the sots at

the bar had seen poor Gulf; Boinger decided he was lost. He filled a platter with cold venison, yesterday's bread, cheese and pickled lizard eggs and found a seat in the back of the warm, quiet room. He was dozing over a third cup of tea when the big door of the inn slammed open and a slender, cloaked figure raced up the stairs.

Boinger yawned, got slowly to his feet and followed. The door to their room was ajar; he pushed it gently open. Mistress Verbeena sat on the bed, Tarkan's blond head pillowled in her lap, her delightfully rounded bodice just above his upturned face. They were murmuring the sorts of things that lovers have murmured since the beginning of time. Boinger withdrew to the windowsill where a sleepy Zereth sat, wrapped in his cloak, his eyes barely open.

The lady seemed not to notice the halfling's entrance, but a few minutes later the door was thrown back by a dark figure she did take cognizance of.

"Bitch!" spat Misteera, upon seeing the other woman.

Why, thought Boinger, from across the room, why, when females of the human species argue, is their vocabulary so incredibly limited?

"Look what you've done to him!" Verbeena replied, rising to her feet to defend herself. "He nearly died on your fruitless quest. You practically killed him!"

"Bitch!" repeated Misteera, failing to meet the verbal challenge. "Leave him alone. Did you get it, darling? Where is it?"

Tarkan, apparently confused by this sudden assault in the morning quiet, looked bewildered.

"Did you get it, Tarky? The stone, did you get it?" asked Verbeena. The young man obediently reached under his pillow in response to her query and produced the faceted yellow gem on its chain. He had knotted the gold chain together so that the circlet was complete. The gem caught the early rays of the sun and sent a single amber ray sweeping across the dark beams of the ceiling. Verbeena let out a tiny cry like the sound a rabbit makes when the midnight owl swoops down. Boinger felt his heart strike a concordant beat. He started forward, but Zereth put a restraining hand on his arm.

"Ah-hah," cried the medium, her long black hair swirling as she rushed forward, hands outstretched. "Now we'll see, you rotten bitch!"

Tarkan sat upright on the bed, in Zereth's second-best tunic for a night shirt, holding the golden gem in his left hand.

Misteera reached him, grasped his right shoulder in pale fingers. "Look, look, look at her, darling! Now's your chance!"

"No," whispered the shorter woman, her hands clasped to her breast. "No Tarkan, my love, trust me, do not"

The young man was pale, still weak from his recent ordeal. The medium seized

the stone from his numb fingers and held it to her eye. A shriek of triumph burst from her crimson lips. "Ha-ha! Here, my love, look, look at the thing you thought you loved more than me!" She poked the gem into the weakened lordling's face, until Boinger feared she would put out an eye, rather than assist its vision.

"No, my darling," cried Verbeena, still unmoving, "as you love me . . ."

Tarkan seized the agitated hand of the screaming medium and held it before his face. Again both women cried out, Misteera in a high-pitched hoot of triumph, Verbeena in a throaty, low moan.

Tarkan did not move for a long moment. All other eyes in the room, including the rumpled visage of the recently roused landlord at the open door, were fixed upon him.

Tarkan smiled. He let the gem and chain fall into the clutches of the dark-tressed medium at his side. He looked at the trembling Verbeena, who hardly dared to meet his gaze. She had moved several steps away from him.

"You were never lovelier," he said. He held out his arms for her and she came to him.

"Bitch!" cried Misteera. The medium stood, shaking with fury. "All right, keep him!" She flung the jewel on the table. "Worthless puppy! Who wants him anyway? B. . ."

"Milady," both Zereth and the landlord advanced to her side. "This must cease—no more, outside please. All the yelling you want, outside..."

Misteera hesitated a moment before she turned to rush out, her face streaming with tears of rage and frustration. She hesitated before the gem and its chain on the table and put forth a hand as if to reclaim it.

Clunk! Boinger's dagger appeared in the wood just in front of those questing fingers. Shocked, her hand clutched to her mouth to stifle one last outburst, Misteera turned and fled.

Boinger gazed fondly at the lovers on the bed, kissing as if no one else was in the room. He plucked his blade from the table and picked up the gem. As Zereth's firm hand took hold of his shoulder, he raised the gem to his right eye.

The lady Verbeena's hair was streaked with grey, her cheek not quite so smooth. As she turned happily in her lover's arms, he could see through the gem that her waist was more than a little plump, her breast no longer firm. The change, slight but real, vanished when he took the stone from his eye.

Zereth and Boinger shooed the landlord and two curious maids from the door, closed and locked it from the outside.

"It's time for breakfast," said Zereth.

"I've eaten," Boinger replied, "but I'll join you."

* * *

"So her beauty is illusion," Boinger said, looking sadly at the stone on the cluttered table between them.

"I saw through the illusion that first night of the seance," Zereth said. "But others did not. The Gem of Seeing negates all that, of course. Misteera knew that, and knew where it was, although she didn't expect Tarkan to go after it himself."

"But it doesn't work for him."

"Are you sure?" asked the elf. "The gem shows things as they really are. But are things really the same for you as they are for another? Of course not. Tarkan sees her as she really is, for him."

"For now," the halfling added.

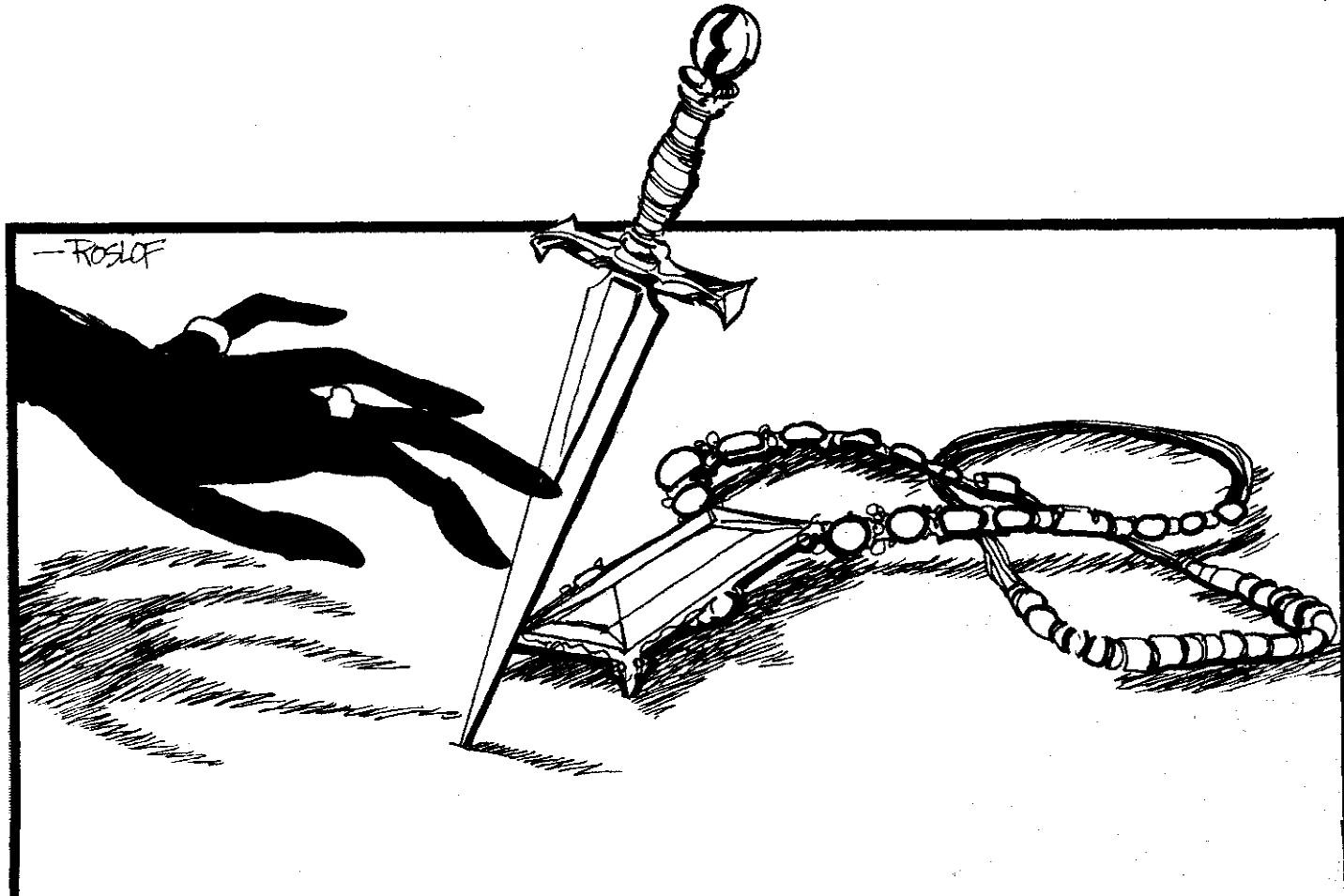
"To be sure," the elf agreed. "Now, do you think you can get that thing duplicated in colored glass before Tarkan thinks to ask for it?"

"I suppose. Why?"

"I think it would make a lovely wedding present, do you not agree?" said Zereth. "Of course, I mean the imitation. We wouldn't want him using it again and again over the years, would we?"

Boinger smiled, "Of course not. And the original should be worth . . . perhaps five thousand. . . ."

"We'll see," said the elf. They both laughed.

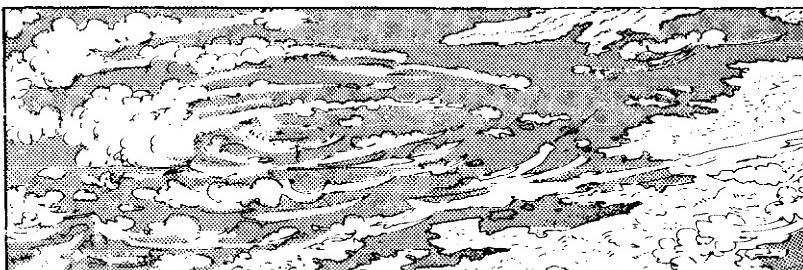
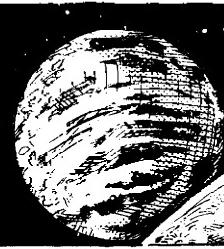


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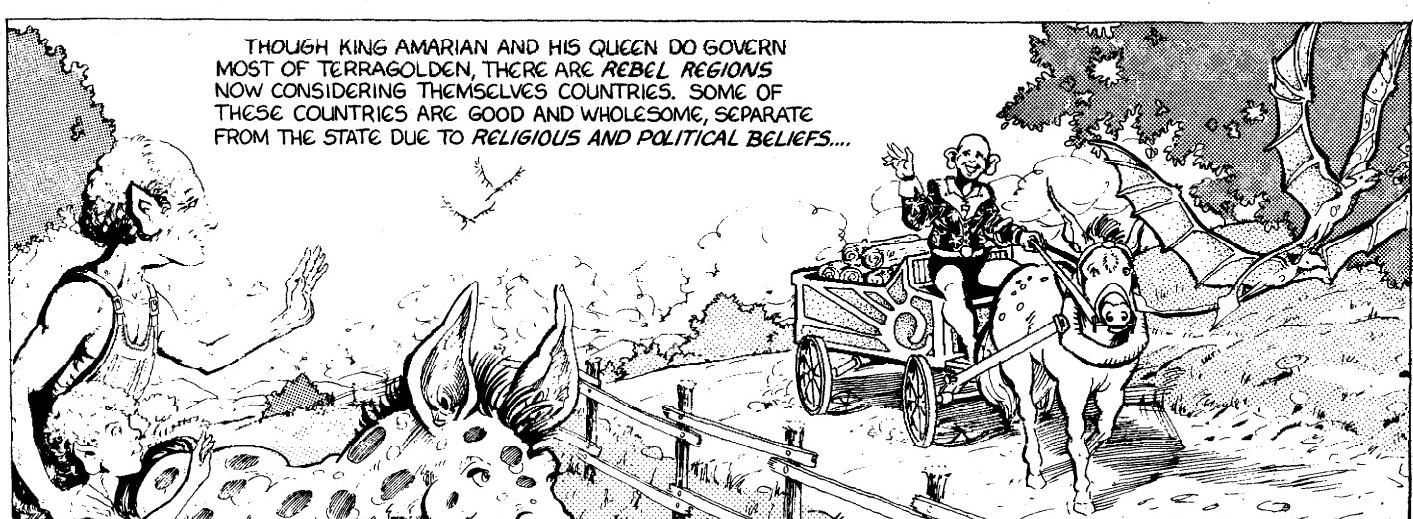
SOMEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE EXISTS A UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL LITTLE PLANET CALLED MORNINGSWISH.



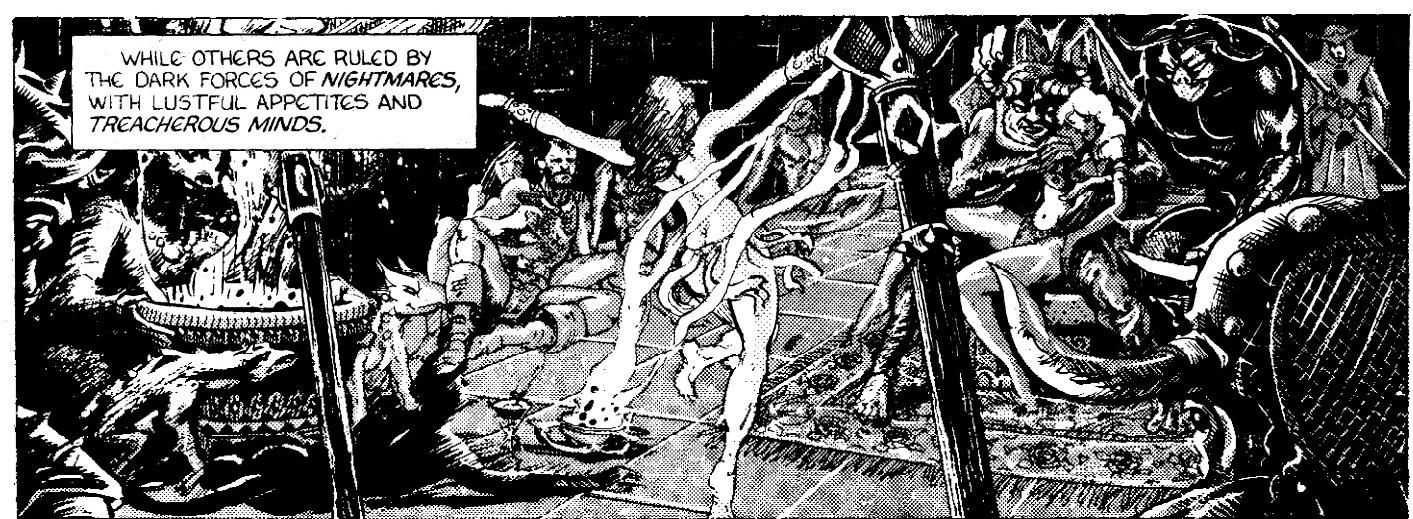
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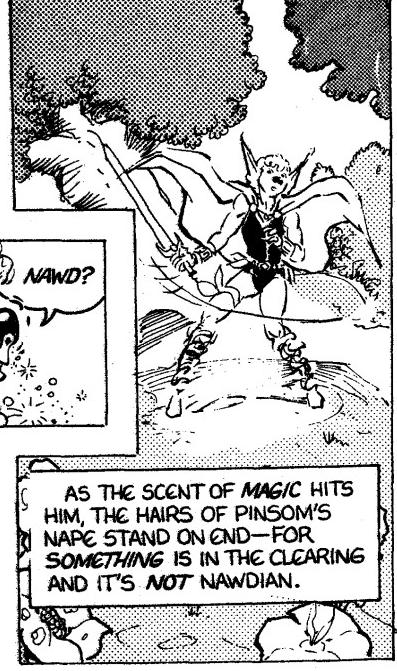
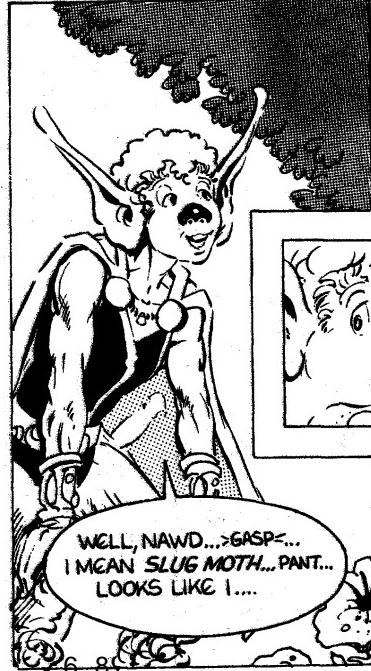
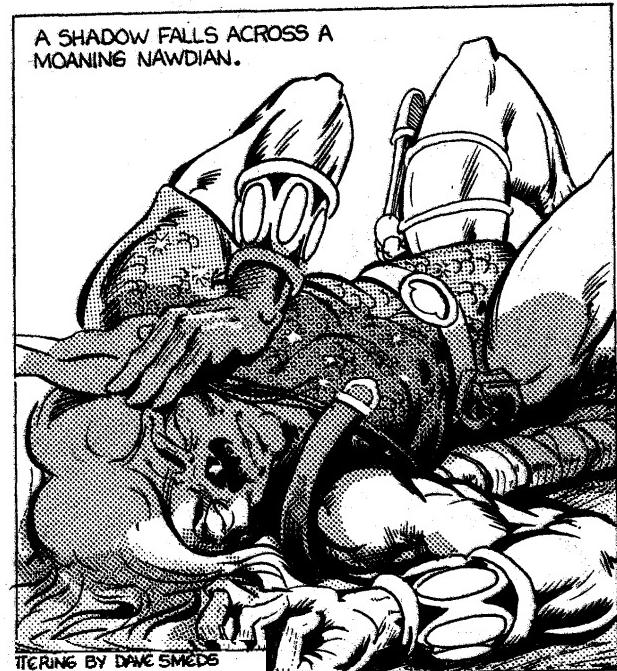
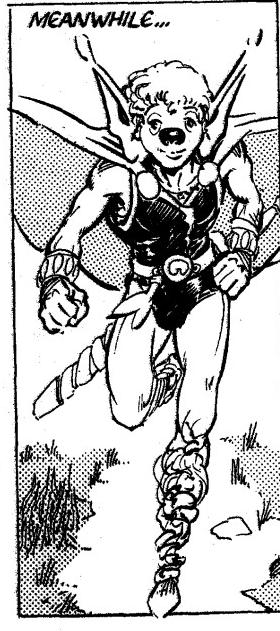
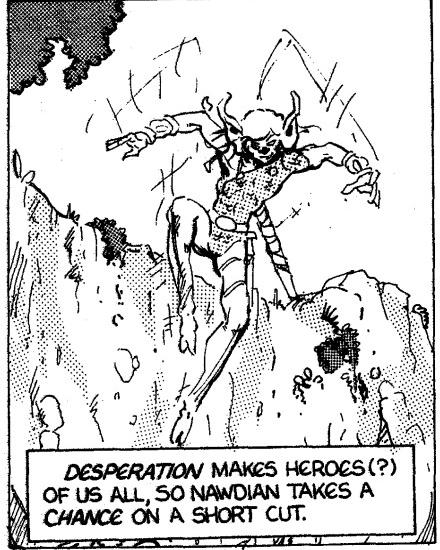
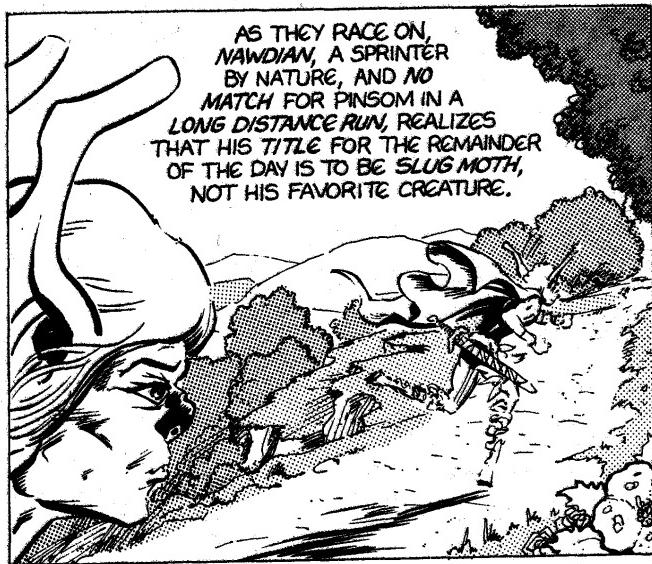


THOUGH KING AMARIAN AND HIS QUEEN DO GOVERN MOST OF TERRAGOLDEN, THERE ARE REBEL REGIONS NOW CONSIDERING THEMSELVES COUNTRIES. SOME OF THESE COUNTRIES ARE GOOD AND WHOLESOME, SEPARATE FROM THE STATE DUE TO RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL BELIEFS....

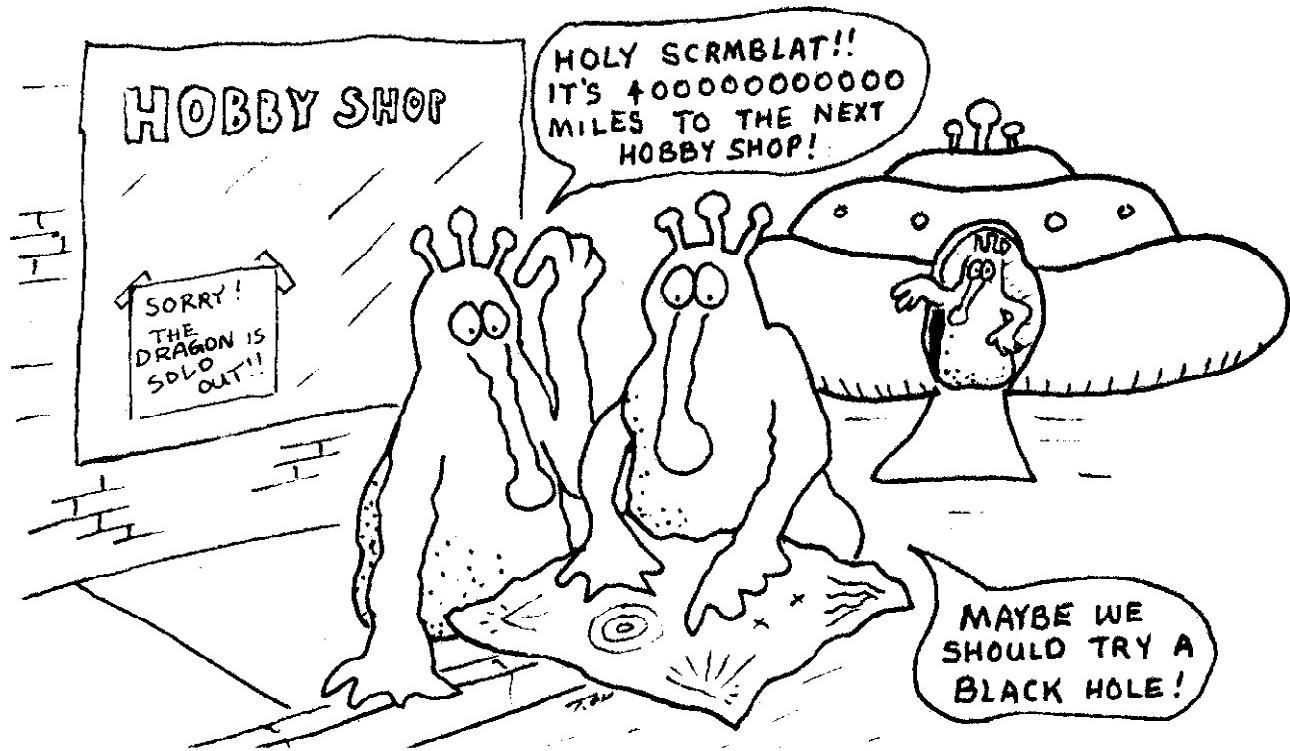


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HOME COMPUTERS

by Mark Herro

Lately I've been getting letters from readers asking which computer would be "best" for them. Questions like that are difficult for me to answer, since my evaluations may not agree with someone else's. But this is a good time to pause and take a look at the most popular computers on the market right now.

Radio Shack

More than 75% of the home-computer market is controlled by three companies: Radio Shack, Apple Computer, and Commodore Business Machines. Of these three, Radio Shack dominates. With more than 500,000 units sold, Radio Shack is considered to be "the IBM of small computers." In fact, its TRS-80 computer line has been the most profitable product the company has ever made.

Radio Shack is currently marketing five different types of computers, three of them on the market for less than six months. The most popular is the Model I TRS-80, in the 16K RAM, Level II BASIC configuration. Remember that RAM is the amount of memory available to the user, 16K being about 16,000 "words" of memory. Level II BASIC is Radio Shack's brand of the BASIC programming language. There is also a Level I BASIC, a scaled-down, beginner's version of the BASIC language. Level

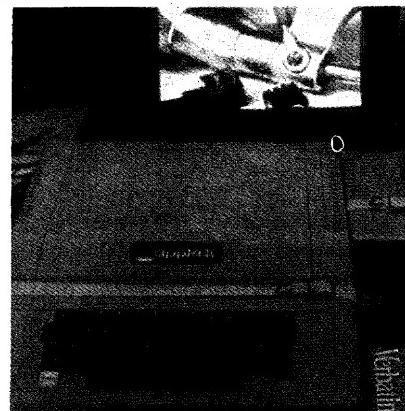
I and Level II aren't compatible with each other (that is, you can't put a Level I program tape in a Level II machine and expect it to work).

One of the biggest points in favor of the (Level II, 16K) TRS-80 is the tremendous number of programs and devices that are compatible with it.

Don't get the idea that the TRS-80 is perfect, though. They do have their problems. Graphics (the ability to draw pictures on a video screen) aren't very good, having a resolution of only 128 X 48 points. System expansion, such as adding more than 16K RAM or disk drives, requires an "expansion interface." This adds both extra expense and extra space/cable/power requirements to the overall system. Model I TRS-80's can't display lower-case letters without a modification to their "guts." Finally, Model I's have come under fire from the Federal Communications Commission. The computer spits out more radio garbage than you can shake a stick at. The effect on nearby TV sets has to be seen to be believed. As of this writing, Radio Shack is still making Model I's, but the FCC may force the company to shut down production.

Covering themselves from that possibility, the people at Radio Shack recently announced the introduction of the Model III TRS-80 (the one in between-Model II) is a computer geared for small business applications and is out of the price range of most

home users). The Model III TRS-80 corrects many of the problems mentioned above (radio garbage much lower, expansion built-in, lower-case built-in, etc.) while retaining compatibility with Model I hardware and software (both Level I and Level II). Model III's cost more than Model I's initially, but they are very similar in cost as they are expanded with more memory and disk.



Apple-II

Apple

Next in popularity is Apple Computer's Apple-II. In my opinion, the Apple-II is superior to the TRS-80 in several respects, but it costs substantially more.

Apple-II's produce color video output and have excellent graphics capabilities. Actually, it has two graphics modes: a low resolution (40 X 40 points), 15 color mode; and a high resolution (called HIRES, 280 X 160 points), six color mode. HIRES can produce very detailed drawings—even fairly detailed reproductions of photographs—but the memory requirements are rather high. More than 12K of RAM is required for a HIRES picture.

The Apple-II also comes with analog-to-digital conversion circuits (through two game paddles) and the capability to generate sound (through a built-in speaker). Both functions can be "addressed" through BASIC statements. They also have a "mini-assembler" for machine-language programming. The combination of these three things—all in the standard package—make the Apple-II an exceptionally versatile computer.

Speaking of BASIC, Apple also has two versions of that language. As with Radio Shacks languages, Apple's "integer"



Radio Shack TRS-80

BASIC and "Applesoft" aren't compatible with each other. "Integer" BASIC is along the same lines as Radio Shack's Level I, except you can't even use fractional numbers here. "Applesoft" is a full-featured BASIC. If you buy an Apple II with "Integer" in ROM, you also get in a cassette version of "Applesoft" for occasional use. If you buy one with "Applesoft" in ROM, they throw in a cassette version of "Integer."

Commodore

Lowest on the "top three" list is Commodore's CBM (older versions were called the PET). Although it was the first "personal" (vs. "hobby") computer on the market, Commodore "blew" its chance to be the guiding force of the industry. The newly introduced PET's fell out of favor with most people because very little documentation (set-up instructions, how to program, machine capabilities, etc.) was supplied with the computer. Commodore has since gotten its act together and made impressive gains in the marketplace lately, but it has a lot of catching up to do.

A main point in favor of the CBM is its "idiot proof" operating system. It more or less tells you what to do, under certain circumstances. The CBM also features "pre-defined" graphics characters—playing-card symbols, boxes, circles, etc.—and a cassette storage system based on digital signaling rather than the straight audio tones the other computers have. The CBM system is much more reliable than the others.

If you have an Apple, Pet or TRS-80 microcomputer,* you can have fantasy at your fingertips with Epyx computer games from Automated Simulations.

Like me, you're probably really into games, all sorts of games. But an Epyx game is more than a game—it's an experience, and it's a chance to use your computer for something other than work. The great thing about Epyx games is that you have a choice. Whether you're a beginner or an expert, you can find games that are easy to learn. Challenging. Fun to play for twenty minutes or



Commodore PET

Other Contenders

Aside from the three most popular computers on the market at the moment, two others that could be considered "coming up fast on the outside" are Atari's Atari 800 and APF's Imagination Machine. Both feature good graphics, sound, joysticks, and a pretty good BASIC. Time will tell if they will grab a good chunk of the market. The Atari machine seems to be selling well, considering the short amount of time it's been on the market.

Prices

List prices for computers can be misleading, since some computers have hidden costs. Sometimes the price is for the complete system: computer, video display, cassette recorder, etc. Others may include just the cassette recorder with the compu-

hours at a time. You can play these games over and over, because you're constantly trying new tactics and strategies.

I've already entered and re-entered a world of monsters and misfits, demons and dwarves, trials, tribulations and treasures with a game called "Temple of Apshai." Now it's my chance to have fun with three more games from Automated Simulations... and I can save money, too!

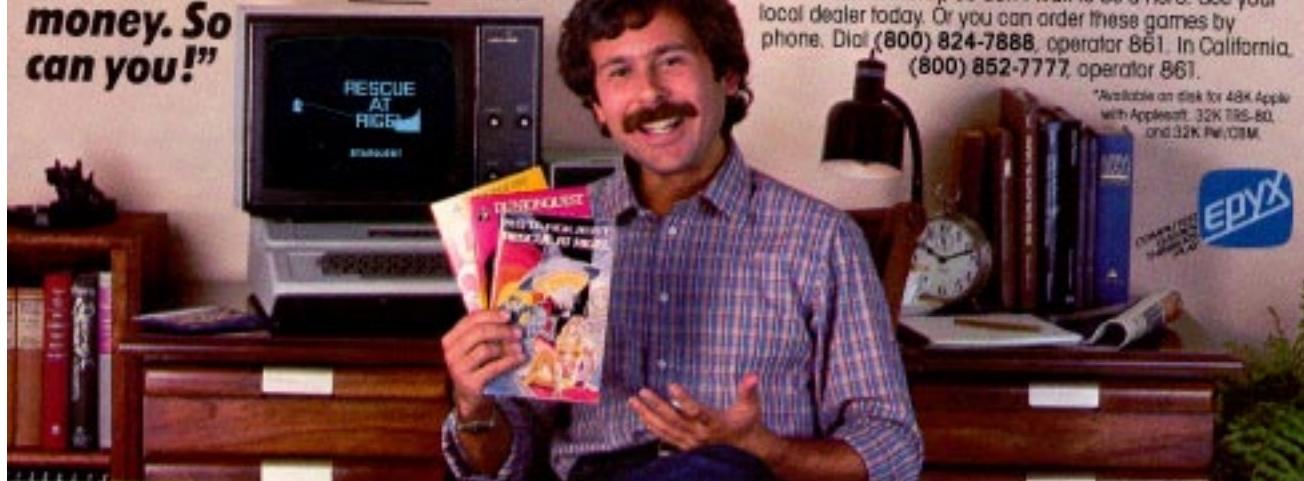
With "Datestones of Ryn" and "Morloc's Tower," I get to escape from booby-trapped mazes, find more treasures and zap more monsters. And with "Rescue at Rigel," I get to outwit the nasty High Toliah and free 10 prisoners.

Automated Simulations has a special offer on "Datestones of Ryn," "Morloc's Tower" and "Rescue at Rigel." Buy all three for just \$49.95, a \$70.00 value. This offer is available for a limited time only, so don't wait to be a hero. See your local dealer today. Or you can order these games by phone. Dial (800) 824-7888, operator 861. In California, (800) 852-7777, operator 861.

*Available on disk for 48K Apple with Applesoft; 32K TRS-80, and 32K PET/CBM.



**"I can rescue ten prisoners
slay a mad wizard, retrieve
stolen treasure and save
money. So
can you!"**



ter. You supply the TV or video monitor. Some don't include anything extra. Here's a summary of prices (as of winter 1980):

TRS-80, Model I, Level II, 16K:	\$850 (complete).
TRS-80, Model III, Level II, 16K:	\$1000 (no cassette).
Apple-II, "Applesoft" in ROM, 16K:	\$1200 (no TV or cassette).
CBM, 8K:	\$800 (complete).
APF Imagination Machine, 8K:	\$500 (no TV)
Atari 800, 16K:	\$1100 (no TV or cassette)

Friendly advice

At the risk of repeating myself from past columns, I'd like to stress several points. First, remember that each brand of computer can only run its own programs. Many companies sell different versions of the same program, one for each type of computer, but don't expect a CBM tape to work on an Apple-II. To a lesser extent, this is also true of hardware options like printers and disk drives. This is why the selection of one brand over another can be so important. (The TRS-80, Apple-II and CBM all have a wide variety of programs on the market.) Second, read some of the books and magazines on the subject. Even if you don't understand some of the magazine articles, you can learn a lot from just reading the ads. Third, visit your friendly neighborhood computer store to see the machines before you buy.



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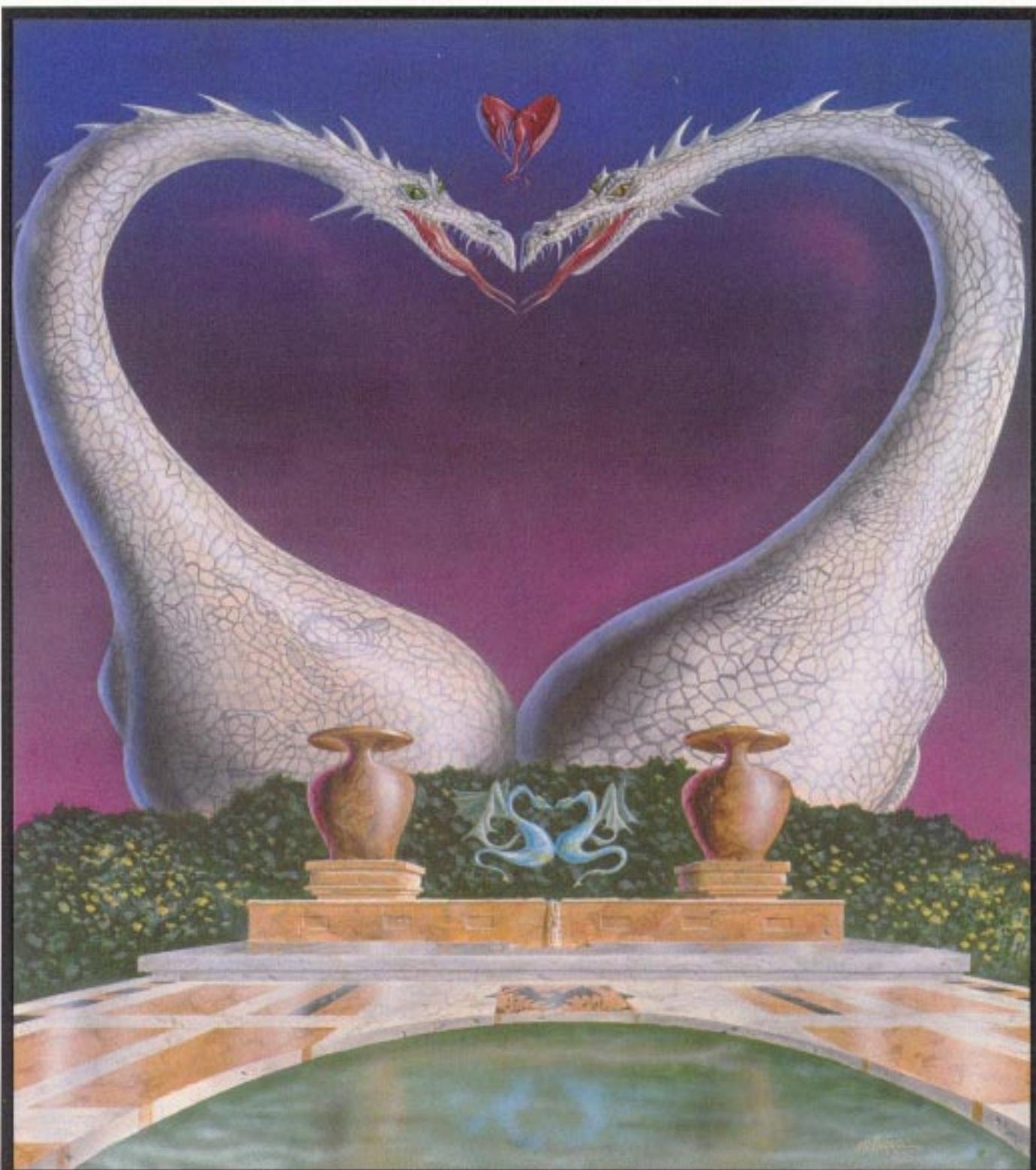
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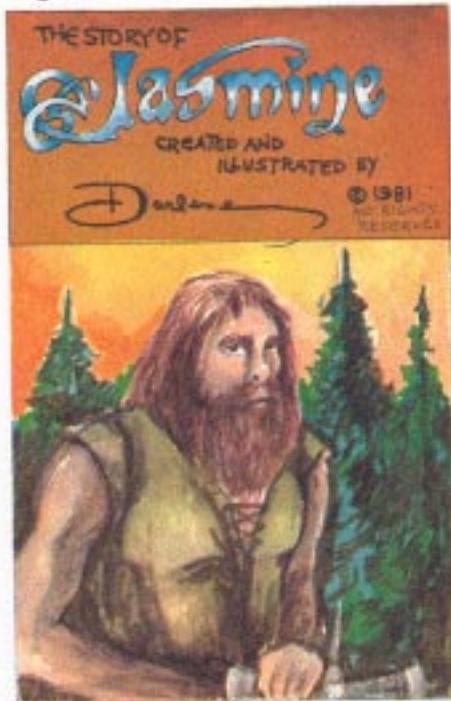
Tell them you saw it in Dragon magazine



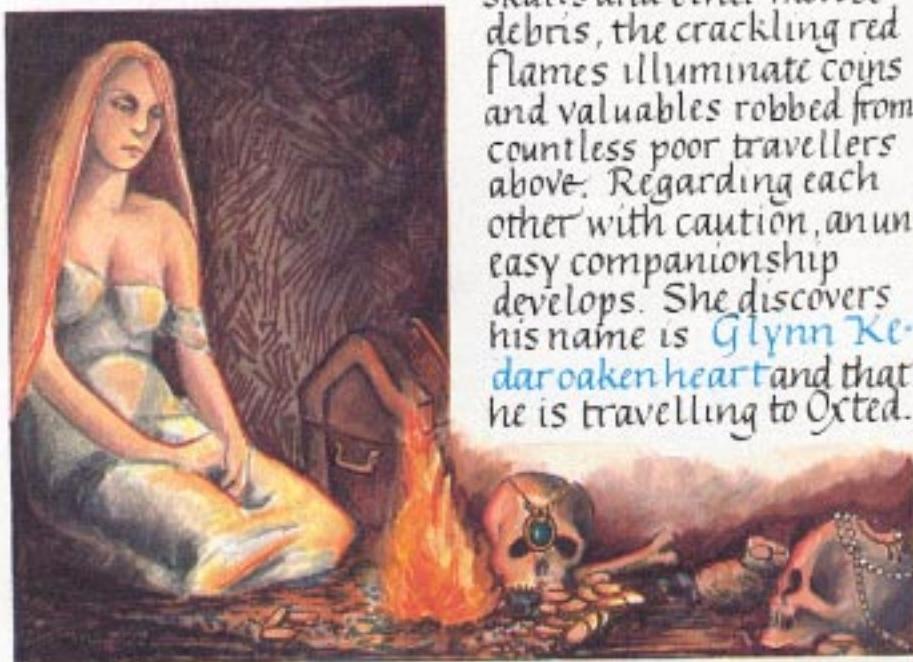
There's one...and another one...

Here's another painting from the easel of Mike Carroll, the artist who produced the cover for our *Dragontales* fiction anthology. Besides being nice to look at, and appropriate for the Valentine season, the picture has another purpose. Worked into the design, some in more obvious fashion than others, are a certain number of dragon-shapes and a certain

number of heart-shapes. How many? Well, that's for us to know and you to find out. We'll make it into a contest: The first person to send a postcard to Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147 with the correct number of dragons and hearts will be immortalized in print in the April issue of *Dragon* magazine. Ready, set — start searching!



The powerful dwarf-warrior rests his weapon and laughs, "Well, you picked yourself quite a name!" "And what would you know of this?" Jasmine replies haughtily. "Of Jasmine, I know some," he says, "I was the victim of a strange prophecy when I was a youth. The poetic



nonsense went something like:

As a warrior lives, a warrior dies.

Yet thee will glide on the wings of the skies,
When the Axe-wolf of Winter has made the land lean.

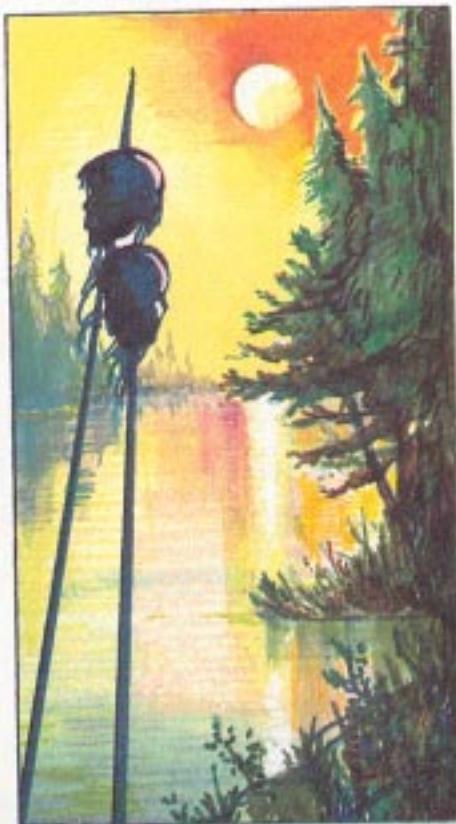
Seek out the white flower, Jasmine—
In the shrine where the white rocks rise,
This is where your Destiny lies.

But I never did pay much mind to it.

Noting that the sun has almost set, he picks up to leave, turning toward the river. Jasmine follows him to the base of the bridge.

"Ah, just as I thought." The dwarf invites Jasmine into a dirt cave carved from the river bank beneath the bridge. He lights a fire. Among the skulls and other morose debris, the crackling red flames illuminate coins and valuables robbed from countless poor travellers above. Regarding each other with caution, an uneasy companionship develops. She discovers his name is *Glynn Kedar* oaken heart and that he is travelling to Oxted.

He seems puzzled for a moment when she asks if Oxted is near. The Great White Throne mountain & laughs, replying the mountain had nothing to offer his people who sought good mines many many years before. They had since changed its name to 'Fool's Hope.' You are a strange one, he looks at her puzzled. You know things you could not possibly know, yet you can't walk through the woods w/out stumbling. Leaving the warmth of the fire, Glenn impales the heads of the cut-throats on their own pole-arms & places them for all to see at the end of the bridge. In death, as in life, the two heads bob in the wind watching over their bridge, to mock or be mocked...



Staring into the fire, she finally falls asleep.



Terrible images of a burning land recur in her sleep until atlast the flames diminish, exposing a tall, black obsidian castle rising within a crown of volcanic spires. Here, Jasmine senses nightmarish treachery and evil. Her dreams reveal the first shuddering glimpse of Ildshöi...

With great interest, Melantha, the Fire Queen of Ildshöi watches Bardulf-Thaattur's plotting. Her passion is power, and she fears nothing. Melantha's web stretches unseen from the volcanic spires of Ildshöi to the unsuspecting Mid-realm. She waits with infinite patience to ensnare the next victim in her glittering web. Attracted by the ruthless power of the dark prince, she plans her entrapment and conquest. Bardulf-Thaattur, Axe-wolf of the Darkness, she muses upon his name. I like that.

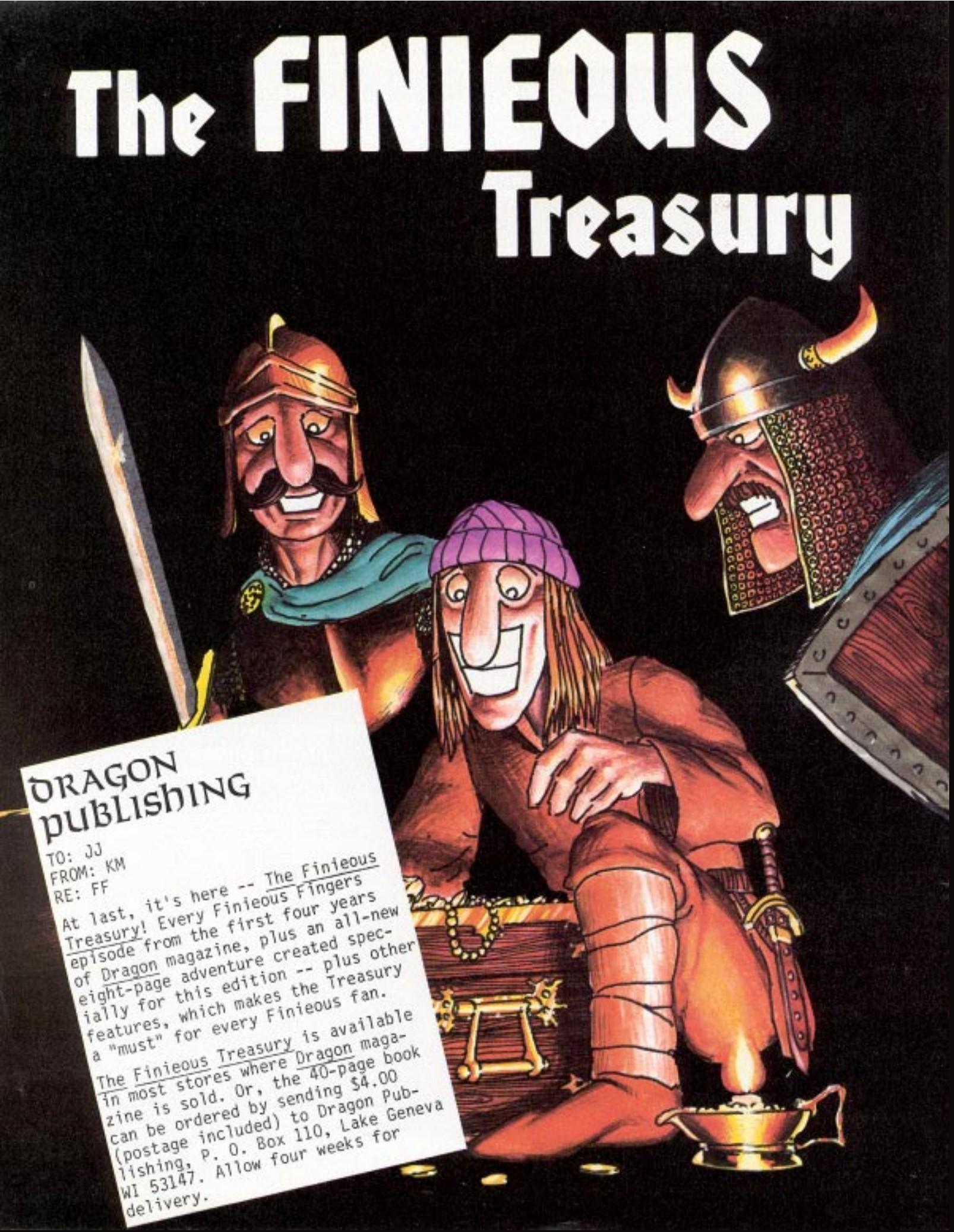
Just as a black orchid is seductive and exotic, Queen Melantha's beauty knows a delicateness unsurpassed. Even so, her deceptive nature is cruel and cunning. Her dark eyes betray the reptilian passions and instincts of her black soul. Her lips twist in a smile of satisfaction. As long as her soul is locked away in a secret place, she will remain forever beautiful, forever terrible, forever Queen!

"What can this mean? He has succeeded in the taking of UR, yet hesitates to kill its King because of his daughter?" She addresses the Captain who has brought her the disturbing news, her eyes burning with contempt. What can this girl - Flavia - mean to him? His lust must not interfere with my plans. Kill her! Her fiery temper melts into a thoughtful gaze. "No wait - perhaps I can use her."

She saunters toward the window and looks southward. "Yes s-s, Axe-wolf, my **Love** - with this girl I shall discover your passions and your weaknesses - then I shall devour you both. Captain, find this Princess of UR and report to me her every move!"

NEXT: THE STRANGER

The FINIEOUS Treasury

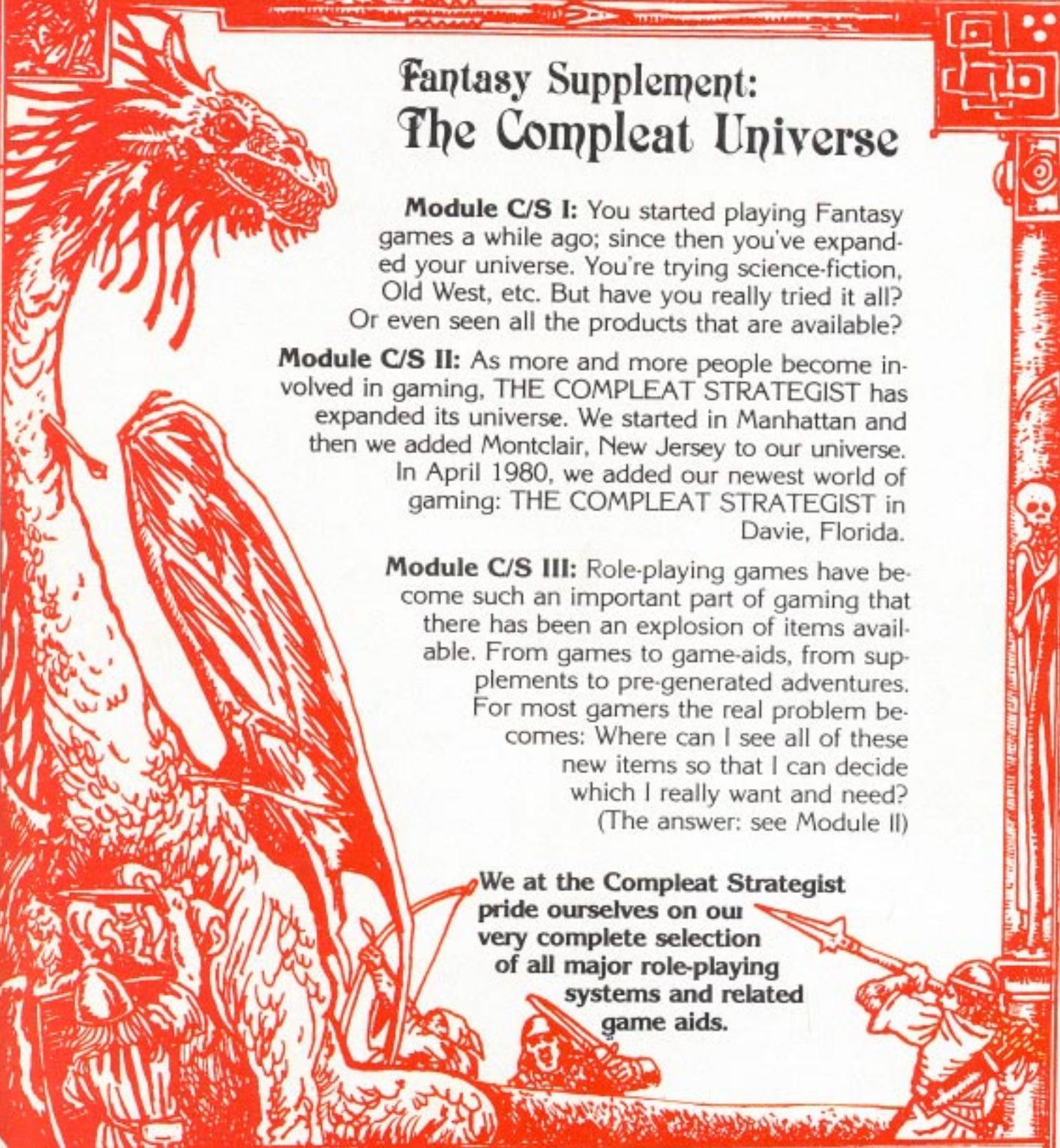


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TO: JJ
FROM: KM
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At last, it's here -- The Finieous Treasury! Every Finieous Fingers episode from the first four years of Dragon magazine, plus an all-new eight-page adventure, plus an especially for this edition created specifically for this edition -- plus other features, which makes the Treasury a "must" for every Finieous fan.

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